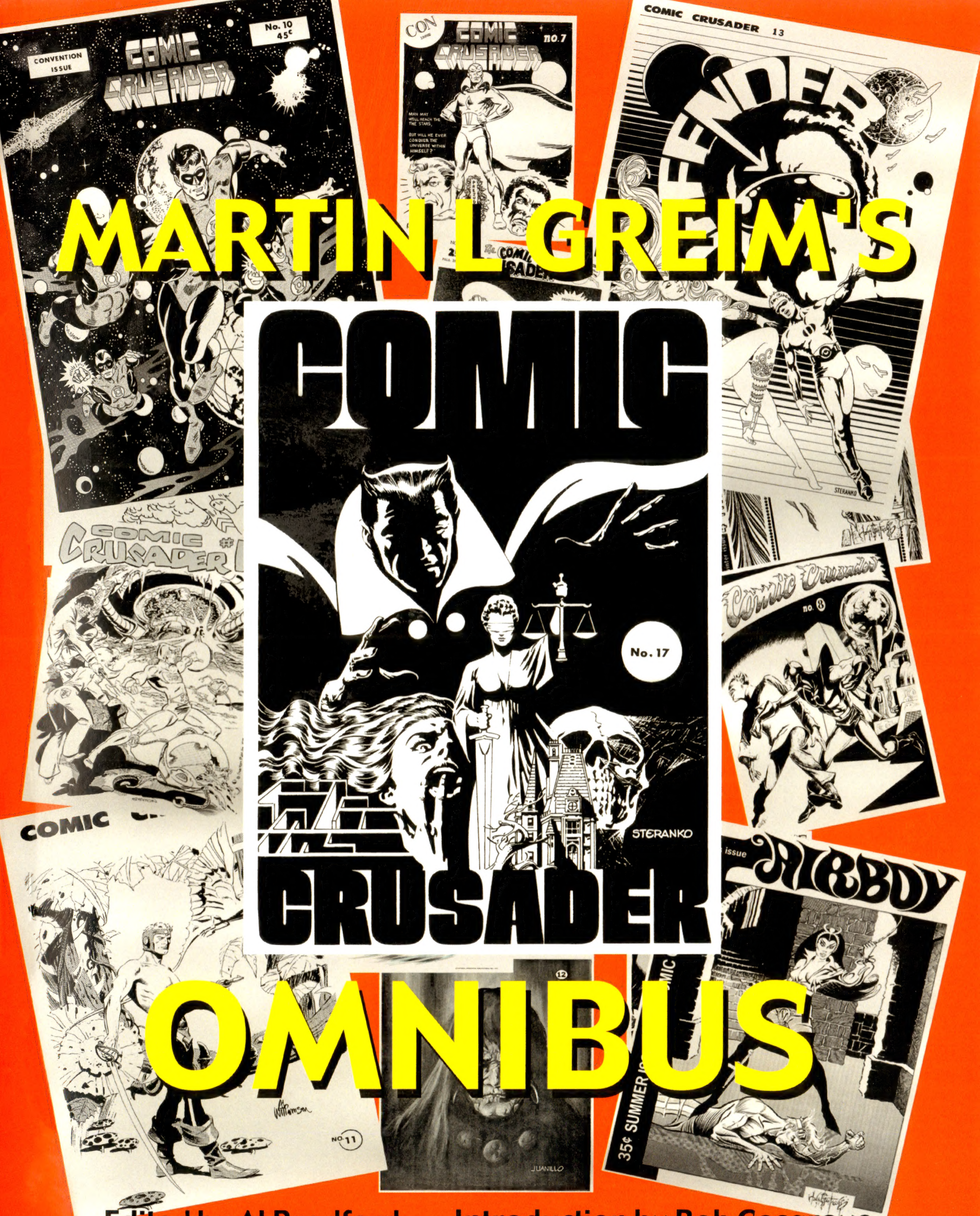
MARTIN L GREIM'S


CONVENTION ISSUE
COMIC CRUSADER
No. 10
45¢
CON ISSUE
COMIC CRUSADER
no.7
MAN MAY WELL REACH THE STARS, BUT WILL HE EVER CONQUER THE UNIVERSE WITHIN HIMSELF?
COMIC CRUSADER 13
STERANKO
COMIC
No. 17
STERANKO
CRUSADER
Comic Crusader
no. 8
COMIC CRUSADER #
COMIC
No. 11
12
JUANILLO
issue
AIRBOY
35¢ SUMMER

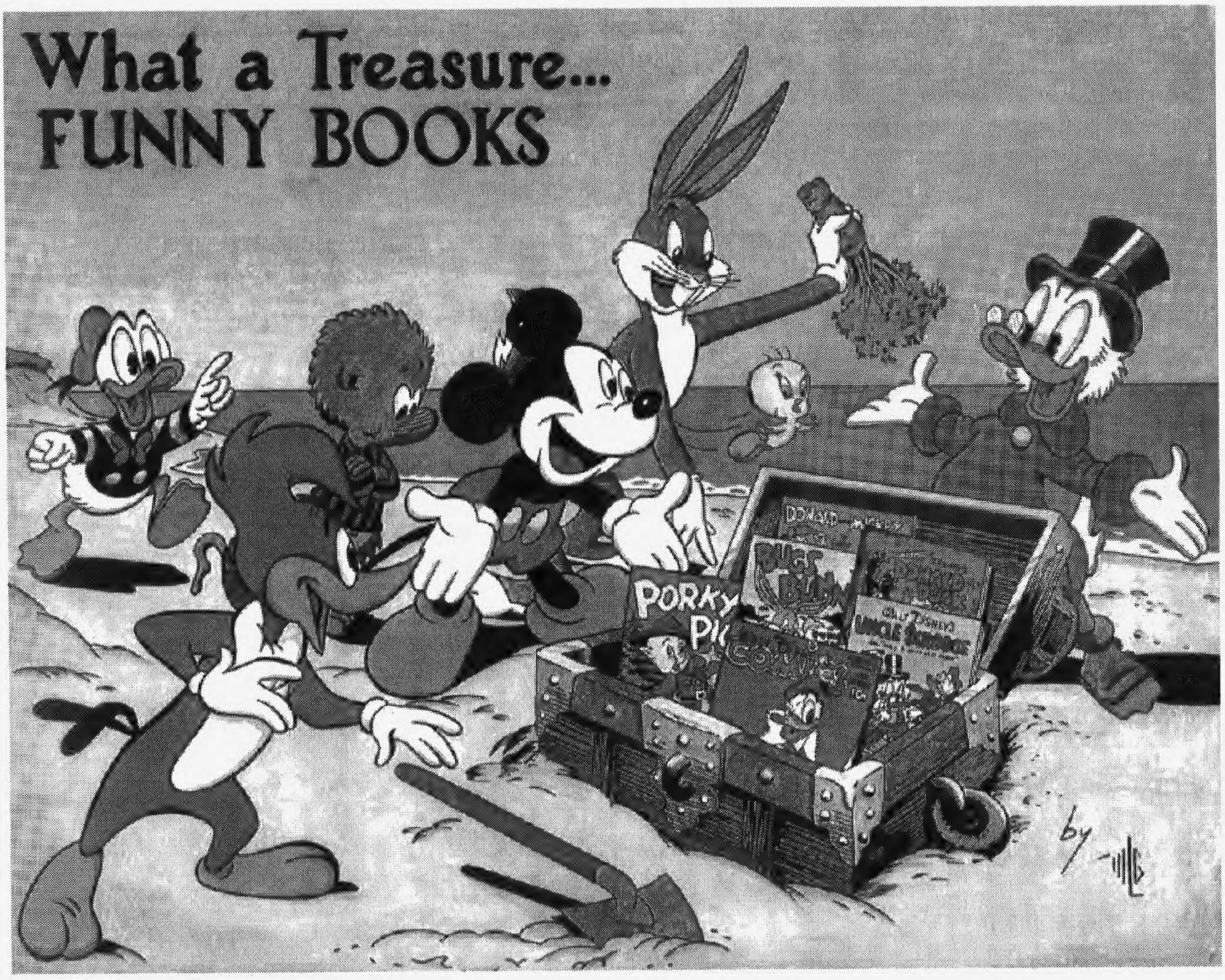
OMNIBUS

Edited by Al Bradford

Introduction by Bob Cosgrove

Martin L. Greim's

Comic Crusader Omnibus


What a Treasure...
FUNNY BOOKS
DONALD
BUGS BUNNY
PORKY PIG
UNCLE SCROOGE
COMICS
by
MLG

Edited by
Alan Fletcher Bradford

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Dedicated to Ellie and Pam

INTRODUCTION

I opened the envelope and removed the letter within. At the top was a drawing of Thor, swinging his hammer, looking for all the world like he was drawn by Jack Kirby and inked by Vince Colletta—except the entire drawing was in pencil. Beneath it, in odd but quite legible handwriting, the letter began: "By the bristling beard of Odin, you are right, Robert Cosgrove! Massachusetts does need more fan activity!" The letter was signed "Martin L. Greim."

It was the Summer of 1967, and I was 15 years old, about to enter my sophomore year of high school. Marty's letter was one of a number I received in response to "Mass.Fan Newsletter," Which I had sent out to a number of fans, using addresses provided by Stan Darcy, who ran Stan's Magazine Exchange, a second-hand book and magazine store that also sold old comic books. By that time, I was, in my own modest way, active in comics fandom, doing writing and Art for various fanzines, and was fresh off attending my first comics convention, run by David Kaler in New York City. My objective in sending out the newsletter was to see if I could organize a monthly meeting of comics fans, perhaps at a local YMCA.

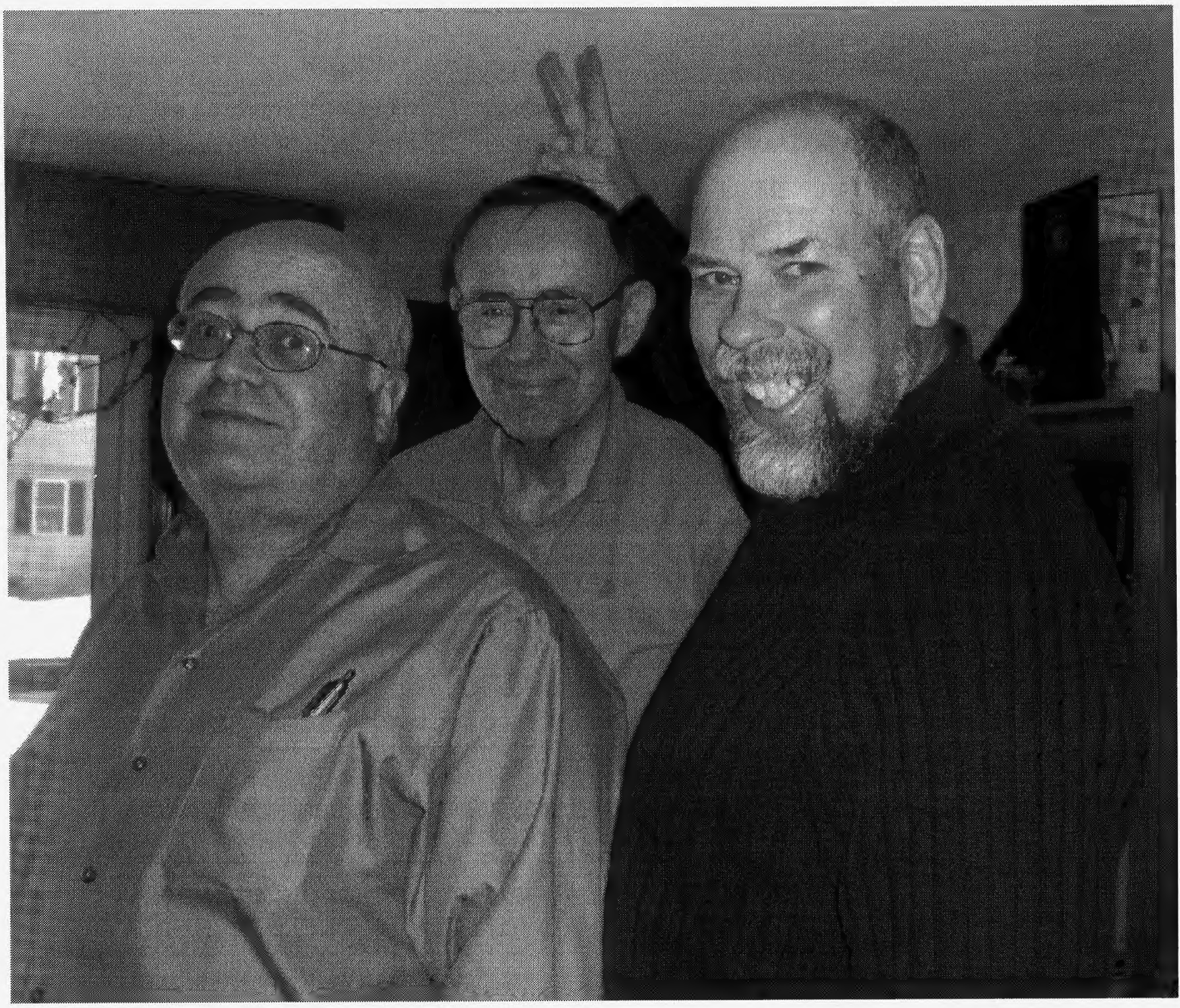
Marty was in his early twenties, married, and working at a local Registry Of Deeds in Dedham. He was aware of fandom, and had also attended the recent comicon, although we did not meet. He had labored for years, publishing nothing, but doing drawings of various comics characters which he eventually bound into a book he had entitled "*Comic Crusaders*." [No, I don't know what happened to it. It's rarer than the Necronomicon.]

Marty and I met and became instant friends. Somehow my original comics fan club objective got lost in the shuffle. We agreed to publish a fanzine called "*Champion*." I would be the "editor" and Marty would be the "art director."Marty threw himself into this work, and he was soon drawing covers, writing articles, and perhaps most impressive to me—snagging an Interview with his favorite artist, Bill Everett, then living in Massachusetts. Sometime in 1968, Marty announced that he was going to publish a "companion magazine" to *Champion*. I tried to talk him out of calling it *Comic Crusader*, telling him that it sounded like a union magazine for comedians. I had no success at that, so *Comic Crusader* it became.

For some of you, who were around at or near the beginning, this collection may bring back the thrill going to your mailbox and finding a fanzine you enjoyed waiting for you. Younger readers May have acquired this volume for the art—some of it amazingly good—or as a sort of archeological pleasure. For me, the collection represents—and often records—memories of the many good times I enjoyed in the company of Marty, his then-wife, Ellie, and our pal Al Bradford, who soon joined us. Together we attended cons, reported on them (see issue #4) met and visited with professionals like Jim Steranko, Fred Fredericks, Mike Royer, Steve Ditko, Al Williamson, Tom Sutton, Jack and Otto Binder, Roy Thomas, and fans and soon-to-be-professionals like Rich Buckler, Richard and Wendy Pini, Tom Fagan, John Fantucchio, Bill Schelly, Len Wein, Steve Fritz and Bill Black. It was a joy to be associated, even in a small way, with them, and with equally talented folks like Dennis Fujitake, Gary Kato, Anthony Kowalik, Donna L. Astin, and others who it was never our pleasure to meet in person. I couldn't begin to name everybody who contributed and whom we met.

Robert C. Cosgrove, 2020

From left to right: Bob Cosgrove, Marty Greim, Al Bradford (circa 2012)
Photo by Carol Bradford



Chapter 1… Issue One: March 1968
Cover: Martin Greim - Interview with Jim Steranko Mongo Mania - The First Inhumans

The debut of The Defender - The Golden Age Falcon

Chapter 2… Issue Two: June 1968
Cover: Martin Greim - Mongo Mania - The First Inhumans
The OTHER Defender - David Manning, The Defender
The Injustice Society

Chapter 3… Issue Three: September 1968
Cover: Martin Greim - Report on the '68 Seuling Con The First Inhumans - Mongo Mania - Interview with Rich Buckler- David Manning, The Defender - Timely Heroes in '50s

Chapter 4… Issue Four: December 1968
Cover: John Fantucchio - Airboy article by Tom Fagan
Steranko art & interview - The Defender - Ditko's Mr.A
Mongo Mania - The Immortal Corpse - The Ghost Patrol

Chapter 5… Issue Five: March 1969
Cover: Jim Steranko - Airboy pt.2 - Gardner Fox article The Defender - EC's Moon Girl - Xalkor - full page Fantucchio illo for short article on Wildcat & Mr. Terrific

Chapter 6… Issue Six: Summer 1969
Cover: Fantucchio - Airboy pt. 3 - article on Joe Orlando Full page Steranko Green Lantern - 4 pg. Ditko Mr. A Articles on The Eclipse and Seven Soldiers Of Victory

Chapter 7… Issue Seven: Fall, 1969
Cover: Rich Buckler - 13 pg article on '69 Seuling Con with over 30 photos - A report on the Detroit Con by Steve Fritz 4 more pages of Steve Ditko's Mr. A

Chapter 8… Issue Eight: Early 1970
Cover: Don Newton - Long article on Rutland Halloween Parade with photos - Dan Adkins article - Tom Fagan article on The Heap - The Defender - Full page Black Cat nude by Steranko

Chapter 9… **Issue Nine: Summer 1970**
Cover: Jim Steranko - A long article on The Ray - Interview with Joe Sinnott Don Newton profile - An article on Kirby's Bullseye - Debut of The Shade by Bill Black and MLG.

Chapter 10… **Issue Ten: Fall-Winter 1970**
Cover: Martin L Greim - 21 pages on the 1970 Seuling Con 4 pages on the Metro Con in Washington, DC - Interview with Bob Kline

Chapter 11… Issue Eleven: 1971
Cover: Al Williamson - entire issue is devoted to Flash Gordon, both the comic strip and the serials - including an unpublished drawing by Alex Raymond

Chapter 12… **Issue Twelve: Early 1972**
Cover: Juanillo - Article on Planet Comics' Lost World series by Tom Fagan - Conan article by Tony Isabella "Nolan The Remedial Barbarian" - Ronn Foss' The Eclipse

Chapter 13… **Issue Thirteen : Late 1972**
Cover: Jim Steranko - 19 pages of MLG's Defender - 8 pages of Ditko's Mr. A - An article on 13 and luck in the comics by Tom Fagan - Interview with Joe Staton

Chapter 14… **Issue Fourteen: 1973**
Cover: Fujitake & Black- Ibis article by Raymond Miller Interview with Fred Fredericks-Tom Fagan article on Mr. Mystic- Bob Cosgrove looks at Kirby's Black Magic - Kirby Demon centerfold - Ditko's "H" series

Chapter 15… **Issue Fifteen: late 1973**
Cover: Kurt Schaffenberger - Captain Marvel issue - The battles between Cap & Sivana - interviews with Jack & Otto Binder, Dave Cockrum, and Kurt Schaffenberger - More of Ditko's "H" Series, Bill Everett article

Chapter 16… **Issue 16: 1974**
Cover: Joe Staton - Interview with E-Man creators Staton & Cuti - Russ Manning Magnus interview - Bob Cosgrove on Kirby's Fourth World - Marie Severin interview - 7-page sci-fi graphic story by Frank McLaughlin

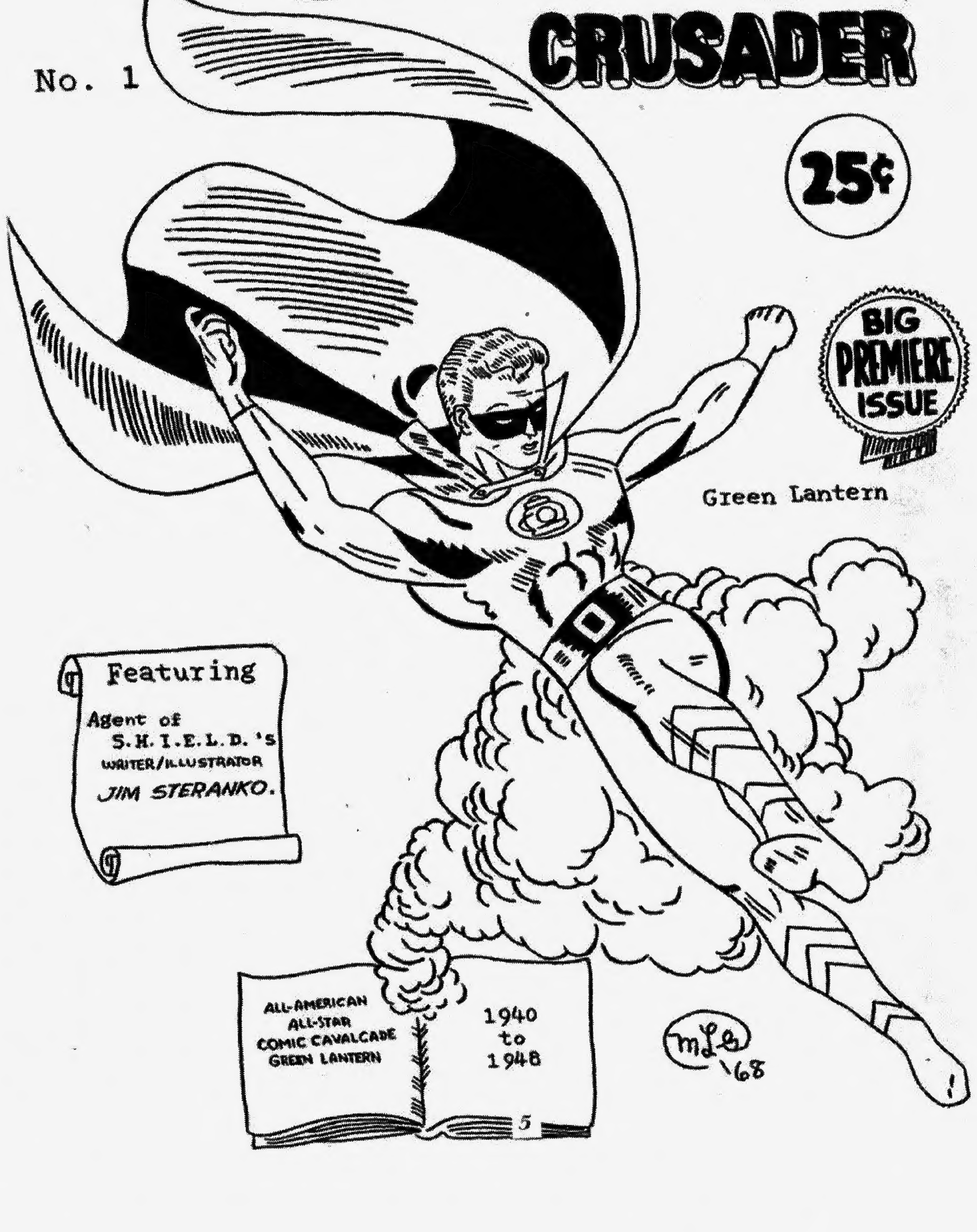
Chapter 17… **Issue 17: 1976**
Cover: Jim Steranko - Man In Black article by Bob Cosgrove - Green Lantern parody by Fujitake, Kato, and Fukumitsu - Stan Pitt and Dick Sprang interviews - Ditko's "H" Series wraps up

The COMIC CRUSADER

No. 1

25¢

BIG PREMIERE ISSUE


ALL-AMERICAN
ALL-STAR
COMIC CAVALCADE
GREEN LANTERN
1940
to
1948
5
MLB '68

Green Lantern

Featuring

Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.'s writer/illustrator JIM STERANKO.

CRUSADER COMMENTS

GREETINGS: Welcome to the pages of "The Comic Crusader".

Within these pages I will try to present the best art possible, showcase the professionals and the best of the amateurs in the comic media. "The Comic Crusader" will also strive to bring you articles of information and create a general meeting place for fandom.

As this fanzine is new to fandom, so am I, as an active fan. My only other fan work being for "Champion", where I am Art Editor. This zine is meant to be a companion to "Champion" and will be published four times a year. (If it is well recieved, it will come out more often.)

I have included, in these pages, an ama-strip called, "David Manning - The Defender". I was never much for ama-strips, but after working with Bob Cosgrove, editor of "Champion", my thinking has been slightly changed. By the way, you might send 50¢ to Robert Cosgrove at 58 Mass. Ave., Braintree, Mass. for issues #1 and 2 of "Champion", the Comic Crusader's companion fanzine. You won't regret it.

As I said before, I want to bring to these pages good art, and stories; so therefore, I am always in the market for good artists and articles. I might add though, I only want the best; the kind you'd want to see in print, if you were buying a fanzine.

With the recent demise of the Comic Academy (a sad event indeed) I suggest you support S.C.A.R.P. (The Society for Comic Art Research and Preservation, Inc.) This organization is designed to promote comic art, preserve it, add to its already large audience, and - specifically - to hold conventions, symposiums, and (eventually) to establish a permanent museum for the housing and display of comic art. S.C.A.R.P. is holding its first International Convention in New York on July 4 - 7, 1968 at the Statler - Hilton. You can join S.C.A.R.P. and attend the Con for $4.00 and for an additional $4.50 you can attend the Con luncheon. The speakers at the Con will include Stan Lee, Wally Wood, Gil Kane, Burne Hogarth, Will Eisner and many more. For membership and luncheon reservations send a check or money order to SCARP, c/o Bill and Linda Parente, 15-D Arcadia Rd., Hackensack, New Jersey. S.C.A.R.P. sounds to me like a good deal. I know I'm joining, so I'll see you at the "Con".

Issue #2 of "THE COMIC CRUSADER" will be out in June. (I hope.) For that issue send 25¢ to:

Martin L. Greim
Box 132
Dedham, Mass.
02026.

Well, I hope you enjoy this issue and for those of you who read fanzines back to front........ Face Front!

Yours 'till next time,

Martin L. Greim

Contributing Artists:

Jim Steranko
Bob Cosgrove
John Lawrence
Bill Loring

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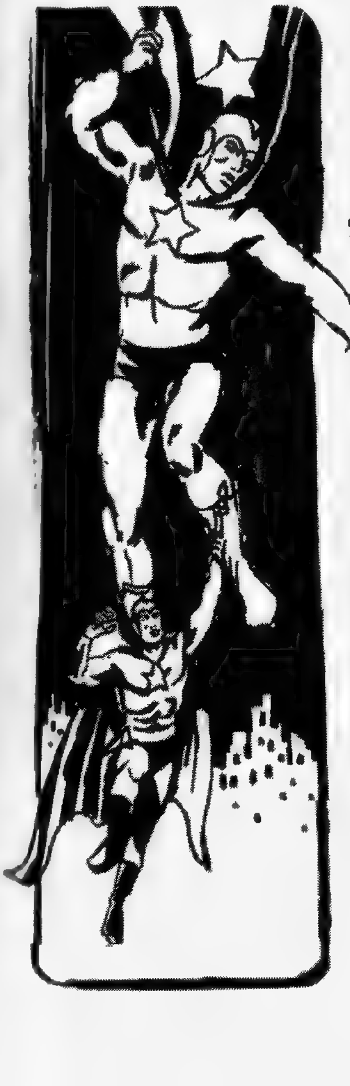

STARMAN

by

Bill Loring

For this first issue of "The Comic Crusader", I am deeply in debt to a fine artist by the name of Bill Loring. Bill is an artist for Allied Advertising Agency Inc, here in Boston. You can see his work in the adds in your newspaper.

Bill really isn't a fan, but when I asked him to do this drawing of Starman and the drawing of The Justice Society, on the back page, he consented to do it for me anyway.

I really like his style, as I'm sure you in fandom will. If enough of you write in about him, I'll try to get Bill "Ad - Man" Loring to do some more work for me.

Thanks a lot for the contribution this issue, Bill.

Martin L. Greim - ed.

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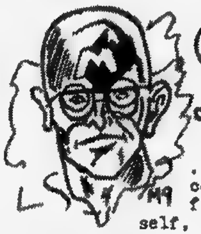
By Bob Cosgrove: Editor of "Champion".



SURPRISED?

...to see merry Marty's mug at the top of a column written by me? Well, take heart friends. I'm always doing gag illos of myself, so I thought I'd make the attempt with ol' MG. Actually, Martin doesn't REALLY look like this. He looks even worse. Heh heh heh heh heh. (That'll pay 'im back for givin' me only one lousy square.) Seriously tho', since space is limited, I'm not gonna expound on any one topic in depth, but just do a little kibitzing in stead.

How many of you stalwarts note some of the dumb letters fanzines recieve? Here are a few that GUTS, an otherwise OK zine, got criticizing Marvel:

"Even worse is the fact that Stan Lee has decided to call Kibry or however you spell it, the "King". Wally Wood is the King and that's that! He has walked off with the National Cartoonists' Society Award three times, whereas Kirby was never nominated." Jack doesn't BELONG to the NCS, and thus couldn't be nominated.

"Marvel's only two good artists are Jack Kirby and Gene Colan and both are stuck with rotten inkers..." Joe Sinnott placed 3rd in the 1966 Alley Awards. Giacoa is also considered an excellent inker.

"Both Charlton and D.C. outmatched Marvel(sales/print run-BC) no matter how they were compared-" Charlton can produce comics cheaper than any other company, yet Capt. Atom isn't making a profit and X-Men is cleaning up. 'Nuff Said?

"'Nuff Said, Irving Forbush, and others were all original phrases started by D.C." It's a safe bet that 'Nuff Said predates D.C. and Marvel. Irving Forbush first appeared in a MAD type magazine by Stan Lee.

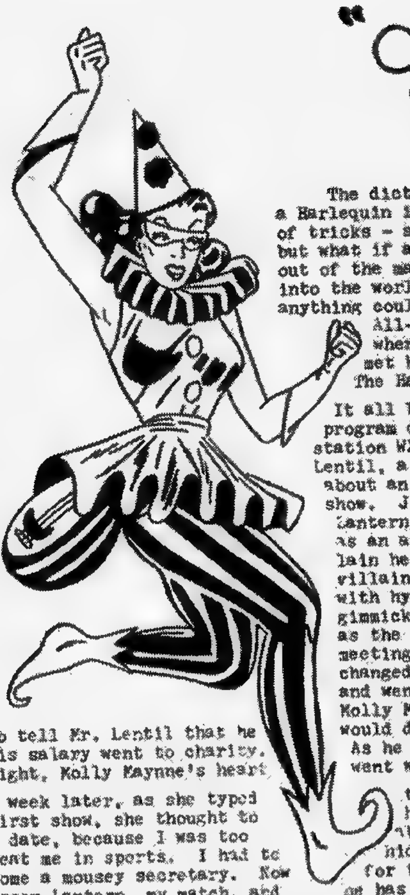
In case you're interested in the mag the fluffs appeared in, send 25¢ to Rob Gluckson at 10347 Monte Mar Dr., Los Angeles, California. 90064.

How many homo saps out there noticed the new artist ghosting Flash Gordon for Mac Raboy? Just guessing, but I'd wager it's Sy Barry.

Well I'm nearly out of space. 'Til next time remember, "SARGE STEEL WAS DISHONORABLY DISCHARGED!!!!!!! _ Bob

"ONCE THERE WAS A HARLEQUIN!"

Written and Drawn
by
Martin L. Greim

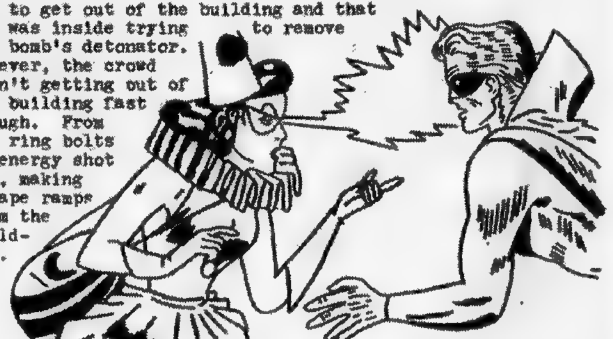


The dictionary tells us that a Harlequin is a fantastic player of tricks - seen in comic plays, but what if a Harlequin should step out of the make-believe world and into the world of reality. Then anything could happen and did, in All-American Comics #89, when Green Lantern first met his female nemesis, The Harlequin.

It all began when Alan Scott, program director for radio station WXYZ, met with J.Q. Lentil, a big shot sponsor, about an idea for a new radio show. J.Q. wanted Green Lantern to go on the radio, as an actor, and battle a villain he had dreamed up. The villain was a costumed girl, with hypnotic glasses and gimmicks. She would be known as the Harlequin. After the meeting was over, Alan Scott changed into Green Lantern and went to see his secretary, Molly Maynne. He asked her to tell Mr. Lentil that he would do the show, provided his salary went to charity. As he flew off into the night, Molly Maynne's heart went with him.

A week later, as she typed the script for the first show, she thought to herself..."I never had a date, because I was too athletic. No man could beat me in sports. I had to hide my talents and become a mousey secretary. Now for the first time, I meet Green Lantern, my match, and he has no time for me... only for crooks." And so Molly Maynne took destiny in her hands and assumed the role of the Harlequin.

It was at this point that one of the Harlequins men told her he had planted a time bomb back at Lentil's Department Store. Angered at this, the Harlequin started to leave to disarm the bomb. However, her men threw a sack over her and knocked her unconscious. After they divided their loot they put the sack in the Harlequin's car and drove to a nearby bridge. They planed to toss her off, when they got to the middle. When they reached the bridge one of the crooks decided to open the sack and take her special goggles. When he did, he found Green Lantern instead of the Harlequin. He had freed himself with his power ring, then changed places with the Harlequin while the crooks were deviding up their loot. A short battle took place, with G.L. the victor. He then took off for the department store, to stop the time bomb.



When he arrived he found that the Harlequin had warned everyone to get out of the building and that she was inside trying to remove the bomb's detonator. However, the crowd wasn't getting out of the building fast enough. From his ring bolts of energy shot out, making escape ramps from the building.

Molly
Maynne

The first thing the Harlequin did was to recruit a gang. She did this by hypnotizing the gang with her spectacles. However, she happened to pick a gang that Green Lantern was after and just then he arrived on the scene. At first he was overcome by the Harlequin's spectacles, but with a surge of will power his ring overcame the hypnotic trance. Green Lantern quickly captured the gang, and went after the Harlequin. As he approached her, suddenly her mandolin fingerboard elongated, thrusting the sound box forward like a battering ram. Green Lantern was knocked through a window and was saved only by the fact he landed on a flag pole, right outside. He was later revived by his aide, Doiby Dickles.

Later that evening, at the radio station, everyone was in a panic. It was almost broadcast time and Green Lantern hadn't shown up yet. Lentil was having a fit, when, true to his word, Green Lantern arrived. He explained what had happened, but Lentil told him it couldn't have been the Harlequin actress, because she was at the station all day rehearsing. Green Lantern was baffled. The radio show went on, but halfway through the play a news flash came in telling that the Harlequin had just held up Lentil's Department Store. Green Lantern was forced to leave the broadcast, but not before Lentil slipped a two-way portable mike around his neck. Now a vast listening audience spead with the Emerald Crusader on his electrifying adventure.

Green Lantern had swooped down and landed on the back of the Harlequin's car, when suddenly the bumper of the car bent back and pined him to the trunk. Before he could do anything, the Harlequin drove her car into a garage and let its door fall down on him. When he awoke, he was hanging by his feet from a pipe and below him was a pillow, placed there by the Harlequin, so if he fell, he wouldn't be injured.

As the last person escaped the building, the bomb blew up. Was the Harlequin still in there?

After leaving the gangsters with the police, G.L. returned to the radio station as Alan Scott. There he was congratulated by Mr. Lentil on a great program. Just then, in walked Miss Maynne, asking Alan if he thought the Harlequin was a match for Green Lantern. His reply was, "I wonder?"

Green Lantern fought the Harlequin, as a friendly enemy, many times. She even aided him when the Justice Society of America fought against the Injustice Society, in All-Star Comics #41. Finally, in Green Lantern #34, she was revealed as a secret agent, not a crook and her career came to an end.

She had been created by Robert Kanigher and when a modern version of Green Lantern was created; eventually, so was a female foe. She was known as Star Sapphire, but with her, the Harlequin magic was gone and she never really made the grade.

The End.

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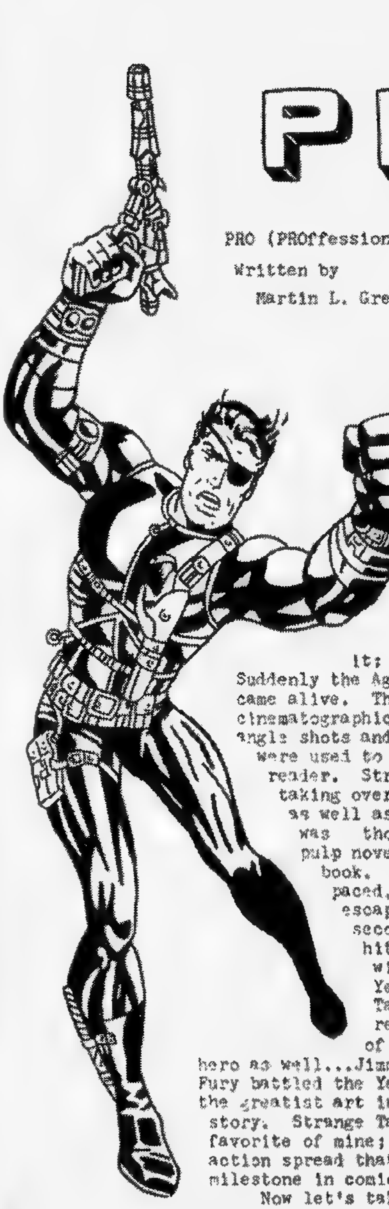
PROS & CONS



PRO (PROffessional)

Written by
Martin L. Greim

Jim Steranko AGENT OF... S.H.I.E.L.D.

With Strange Tales #151 a new name appeared on the credits of the Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. strip... Art by Jim Steranko. Not that this was an earth shaking event, for, as a matter of fact, I didn't even notice it. However, with issue #154 of Strange Tales, believe me I noticed it; boy did I notice it! Suddenly the Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. series came alive. The art was refined; almost cinematographic. Symbolic montages, angle shots and unusual visual effects were used to create an impact on the reader. Strange Tales #155 saw J.S. taking over the writing of S.H.I.E.L.D as well as the art work. Now, it was though you were reading a pulp novel, rather than a comic book. The Fury strip was fast paced, filled with hairbreath escapes, unique plots and split second action. Jim really hit an all time high, though with the begining of his Yellow Claw series in Strange Tales #160. Not only did he re-introduce the arch villain of the 50's, but a great hero as well...Jimmy Woo. For 8 great issues Fury battled the Yellow Claw; with some of the greatist art in comicdom telling the story. Strange Tales #167 is a particular favorite of mine; for it has a four-page action spread that should go down as a milestone in comicdom.

Now let's take a look at the man behind the Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. series. A man, who with his background, could have been one of its top agents. Mr. Steranko was kind enough to grant me an interview and I asked him the following questions:

M.G. Would you give me some material on your background?

J.S. I'm now 28 and began drawing comics a year and a half ago with the first Shield story I did! I just finished four years at an ad agency as art director. I've written a number of magic books "Steranko's World of Escapes", "Stacked Deck", "The Ultimate Move", and "Steranko on Cards". I've picked locks, done card magic and jumped off bridges in chains.

M.G. Good grief! Do you do anything less active?

J.S. Yes. Lead singer with a folk group, play guitar, bass, sax, drums, piano and do MC and comic work. However, speaking of being active, I got busted up pretty good in a coupla nice sports car and motorcycle accidents.

M.G. Watch that drawing arm, Jim.

M.G. How do you relax?

J.S. I have a passion for reading and collecting books, all kinds from pulps on up. Love girls with long red hair. (My wife, who has redish brown hair, decided to grow her hair long after hearing that. Hmm - M.G.) Like to fence occasionally, when I have time and have a nice sword collection. I also have a $1200 stereo system, dig Wes Montgomery, Howard Roberts, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Sinatra, Beatles, Lou Rawls, Brasil 66, and Stanley Turrentine.

M.G. Anything else?

J.S. Oh yes! I failed art in high school.

M.G. When did you first start working in the comic field?

J.S. My first work in comics was for Harvey Publications. Joe Simon asked me to design a number of super heros for a new comic line! Spyman, Gladiator and Magicmaster were brought... Spacewolf and Future American were turned down! The powers to be didn't feel I drew well enough to illustrate these characters. So, I went to Marvel, Stan looked at some sketches and gave me the Shield strip...just like that!

M.G. How do you feel about Nick Fury?

J.S. My ideas about Fury and Stan's were frequently in conflict! I feel Fury should be more sophisticated, especially in his position as director of Shield! I don't believe a bumbling, fumbling and grumbling ex-sgt. would be believable! I gave Fury style...cleaned him up! Being unshaven and dirty was OK for jumping in and out of foxholes, but not for meeting presidents and statesmen. I felt S.H.I.E.L.D. should not be a mere extension of Sgt. Fury and his commandos! Fury would appear ludicrous running around in his black zip-suit with a two day beard, looking like he hasn't washed for a week. Of course, many at Marvel feel quite differently, but Stan has me handle the strip as I choose; tho' many would still prefer it the old way!

M.G. Perish the thought.

J.S. Sure, I developed Fury in the anti-hero tradition. He kills without punishment, is irresistable to women, the whole bag! But, could he be any other way? He's damn tough...not quite as eloquent as James Bond or Derek Flint, but he makes up for it in a kind of savage charm...Lady Luck is the woman he sleeps with! Fury is contemporary...He is right now!

M.G. What are your plans for the future?

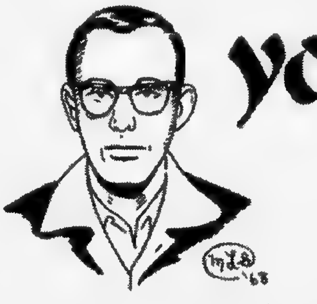
J.S. I am currently involved with several TV and film properties, doing storyboards and scripts! This is the direction I'm headed now.

M.G. What comic do you enjoy reading the most?

J.S. My own! Wouldn't it look like hell if I didn't?

So ended my interview with Jim Steranko. In the comic world, there is no other figure quite like him. Always impeccably dressed, his associates jokingly call him the "Ivy League Dracula". His blondish-brown hair sweeps backward without a part. It has been said that there is a James Dean coolness about his face. As I said before, J.S. would make a wonderful agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. His life reads, like he has just what it takes for membership. Jim Steranko has breathed life into Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. and mede it into a top series. So much so, that now it has its own book. Of the Marvel line, it ranks as one of my favorites.

I wish to thank Jim Steranko for granting me the interview. He's a gracious a pro as he is a tremendous artist.



yours truly M.L.G.

CON (Amateur CONtributor)

For this first issue's amateur contributor, I decided to contribute myself. The drawing on the left is a self portrait. Actually it dosen't look too much like me. I'm really more the Rock Hudson type.

I am 25 years old and have loved the world of comic books for as far back as I can remember. I come, originally, from Roslindale, Mass. (a suburb of Boston), where I managed to amass a large amount of "Golden Age" comics. I started drawing at the age of eight, by swiping from Cosmo Cat strips. I later graduated to the work of Bill Everett. I've never gone to art school, mainly because of lack of funds, but over the years I've managed to develop my art work to a passable plateau.

My interest in comics was somewhat dimmed during my late teens, for my family moved and I left behind a large portion of my comic collection. When I think of the cash value of what I left behind, I could end it all! I was also interested in girls and comics seemed trite in comparison. It wasn't until 1963 that I again came into contact with the world of comic books. A friend of mine was doing a term paper on comics for his college English class and asked me to do some illos for him. When I began trying to get back issues of comics, I found prices had changed slightly, to say the least. My friend was interested mostly in the Justice Society and you all know what back issues of those go for. The more work I did on his report, the more interested I became, 'til finally I began collecting again. Today I have just about every Marvel comic put out since The Fantastic Four #1, and a lot of "Golden Age" material as well.

I must note here, that I was very fortunate to marry a girl who puts up with this hobby of mine; even to the point of reading them and going to a comic Con in a super hero costume. Because of my renewed interest in comics, it was inevitable that I should become acquainted with fandom.

My favorite artists are Bill Everett, Jim Steranko and Al Williamson. (How's that, for varied taste?) My hobbies, other than collecting comics, include doing a bit of judo, now and then, pistol and rifle shooting, chess, and writing articles for Bob Cosgrove's and my fanzines. (It is because of Bob that I began work in fandom. Until I met him, I was just content to read fanzines, not publish or work for them.

As for creating an amateur strip, I have two to my credit. David Manning, The Defender and the redesigning of Space Guardian's costume for Champion. (*Note - Space Guardian was created by Bob Cosgrove, editor of Champion.) I also write the stories for both.

For transportation, I tear around town in a 1965, 8-cylinder, Barracuda and for money, I work at the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds.

There you have it. The first in a series of reports on amatuer contributors to the comic media. So you fans out there, write and give me a capsule history of yourself. The best will be printed here in this column.

Yours truly,

mLG

THE COMIC CRUSADER PROUDLY PRESENTS.....

A Salute To S.H.I.E.L.D. & JIM STERANKO

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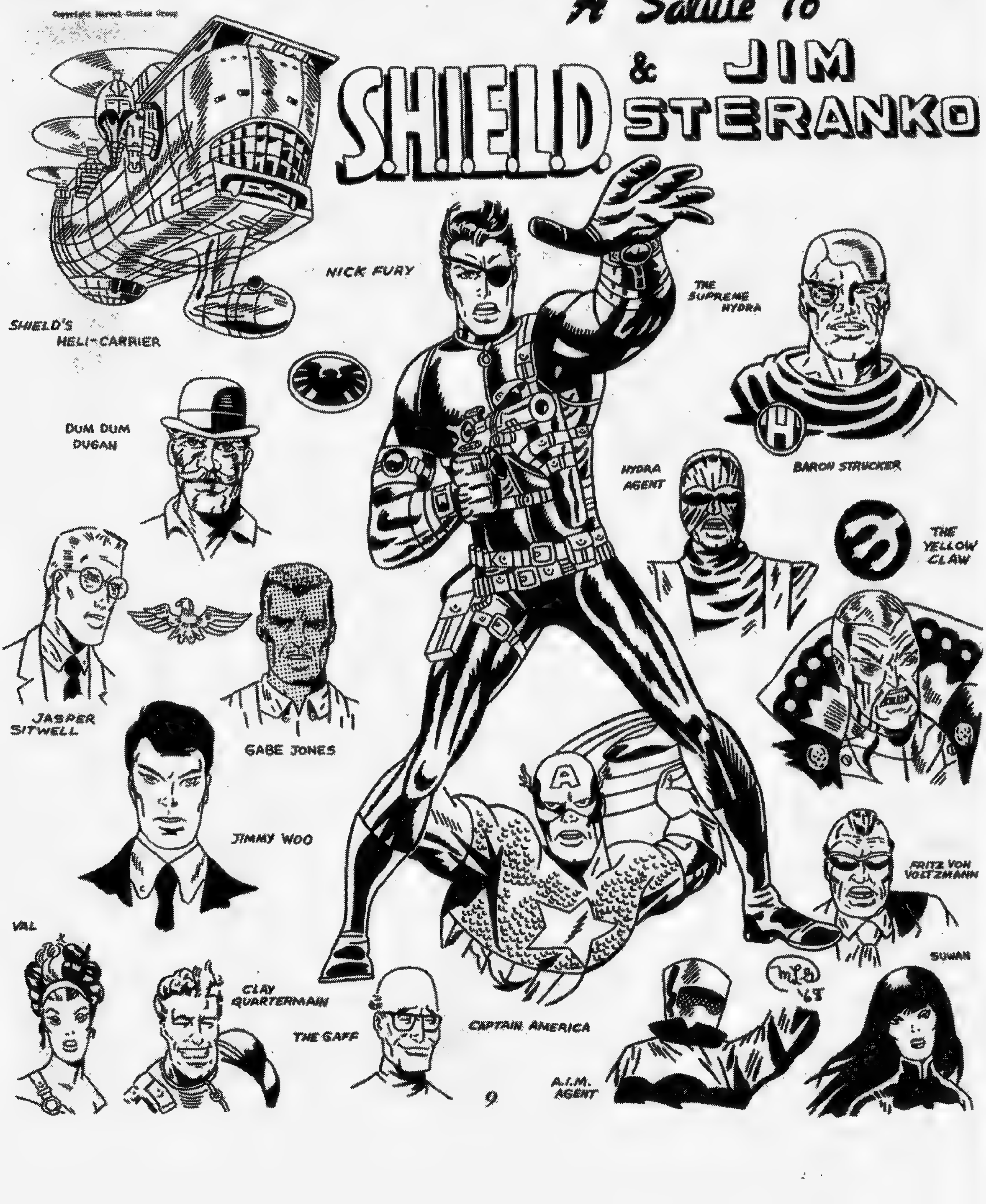
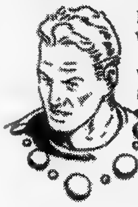
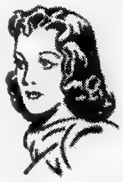

SHIELD'S HELI-CARRIER
NICK FURY
THE SUPREME HYDRA
BARON STRUCKER
DUM DUM DUGAN
HYDRA AGENT
THE YELLOW CLAW
JASPER SITWELL
GABE JONES
JIMMY WOO
FRITZ VON VOLTZMANN
VAL
CLAY QUARTERMAIN
THE GAFF
CAPTAIN AMERICA
A.I.M. AGENT
SUWAN
mLG '68

MONGO MANIA
by
Martin L. Greim

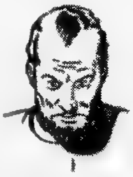
To attempt to write an article on Flash Gordon in this limited space, would not do justice to the hero; so instead I'll give you a rundown on some of Mongo's more notable characters.



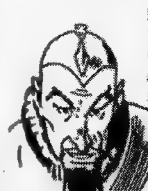
FLASH GORDON - Yale graduate and world renowned athelete, who journeyed to the planet Mongo, when the world thought it was going to collide with Earth. On Mongo, Flash faced many dangers and finally freed the planet from a tyrant's domination.



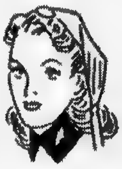
DALE ARDEN - Flash's sweetheart. She was a passenger on the transcontinental plane that crashed near the observatory of the scientist who was to take them to Mongo. All through Flash's adventures, she was by his side sharing in the action.



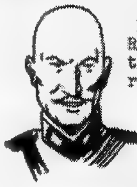
DR. HANS ZARKOV - The brilliant scientist who rocketed, with Flash and Dale, to Mongo in a space ship of his own design. His scientific knowledge and courage helped Flash many times in his battle to free Mongo.



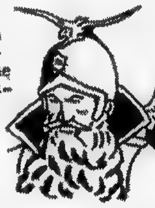
MING the MERCILESS - Self-proclaimed emperor of Mongo. This tyrant tried to imprison and kill Flash and his friends many times, until Flash finally defeated him and returned Mongo's rightful ruler to the throne.



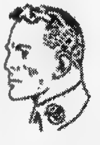
QUEEN AURA - Queen of Arboria, Ming's daughter and wife of Mongo's rightful ruler. Beautiful and brilliant, she loathed all that her father stood for.



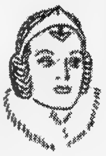
KING BARIN - Rightful heir to the throne of Mongo; who ruled the kingdom of Arboria, until Flash Gordon restored him to the throne of Mongo.



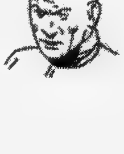
KING VULTAN - Ruler of the Hawkmen. In one of Flash's early battles, Dr. Zarkov saved the Hawkmen's flying city from devastation and earned the respect of Vultan and his people.



RONAL - Blood relative of King Barin and husband of the ruler of Frigia. He first met the Queen when he accompanied Flash Gordon to this frozen land.

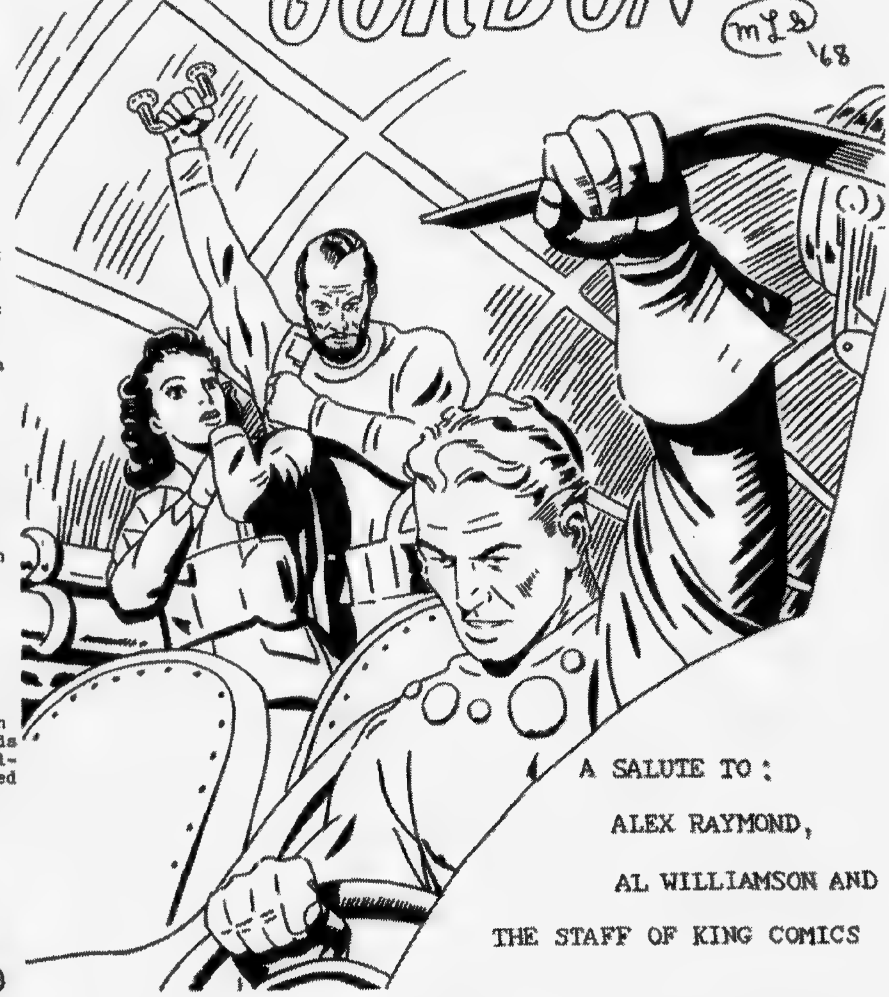


QUEEN FRIA - Ruler of the frozen northland of Frigia. At first she loved Flash Gordon, but later she fell in love with and married Ronal.



ERGON - The leader of the Power Men; Mongo's engineers and technical men who opposed Ming.

FLASH GORDON

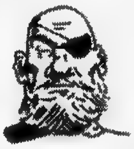


A SALUTE TO:

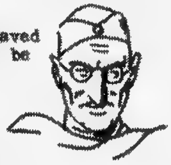
ALEX RAYMOND,

AL WILLIAMSON AND

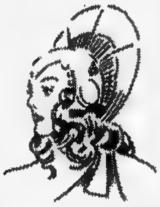
THE STAFF OF KING COMICS



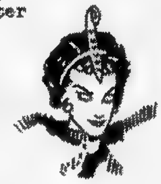
COUNT BULOK - One of the leaders of Mongo's outlaws, whose hideout was in the Mongo sewers.



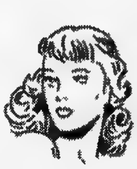
DR. BONO - The doctor who saved Flash's life when he was to be executed by Ming.



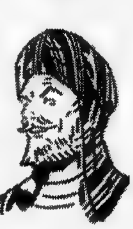
QUEEN UNDINA - Ruler of Coralia, Mongo's undersea kingdom. She saved Flash from drowning, by making him a water breather for a time.



AZURA - The Witch Queen. She put Flash under her power by way of a drug; but he came to his senses and forced her to take her own drug, after she mistreated Dale.



QUEEN DESIRA - Ruler of Tropica. Flash Gordon with the help of mountain raiders, restored her to the throne after it had been taken over by a tyrant.



GUNDAR - Leader of the mountain raiders who became Queen Desira's husband.

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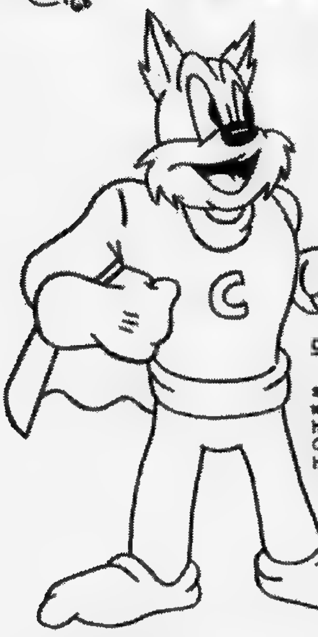
THE FIRST INHUMANS

PART 1.

Written and Drawn
by
Martin L. Greim

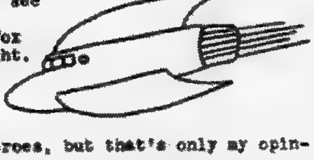


Long before the Marvel Comics Group created their version of the Inhumans, there existed another kind of inhuman. These inhumans were realy inhuman, for they were animals. Come with me now, as I take you into the surprising world of "The First Inhumans".

Now some of you may laugh and say, "Funny animals. Bah, you can have em!" Bear with me, for some of their stories were as well written as many being turned out today. In fact, even mighty Marvel had an animal super hero, as we will see later in this series.

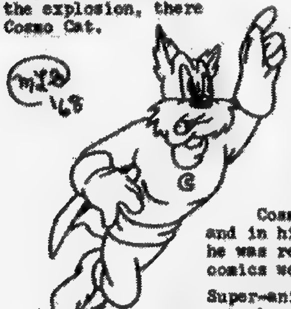
COSMO CAT

Probably not the most famous super-animal of all, but when I was at a tender age I prefered him to Superman or Batman any day. Cosmo Cat differed from most of his breed, in that there was real humor in his stories. It was almost if he were lampooning his human counterparts. He also preceded Marvel, by many years, in having serialized stories. Indeed, his battle with a villain named Horroface, was as dramatic as many of the stories I've seen written today. As a matter of fact, many of his stories contained something else I rarely see today---a moral.



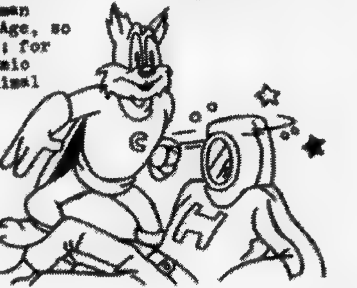
Cosmo Cat was published by Fox Feature Syndicate (Yes that's right. The same people who published the Blue Beetle.) and was drawn by Pat Adams. As a cartoon character, he was perhaps better drawn than most of Fox's human heroes, but that's only my opinion.

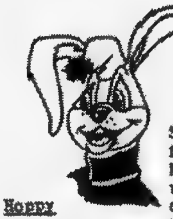
Cosmo wasn't always super. At one time he was just a poor starving alley cat. Then one day he got a job in a defense plant, making munitions. He worked there until one day he droped a U-235 bomb. When the smoke cleared away, from the explosion, there stood a new champion of justice-Cosmo Cat. He was now endowed with cosmic power. He could fly, had the strength of a thousand elephants, and had X-ray eyes. Cosmo was also a space traveler. Although he could fly under his own power, for the most part, he used a rocket ship that had a crime detector telling him when and where he was needed.



Cosmo Cat appeared in Frisky Animals and in his own book. For a time, in 1953, he was revived as Super Cat, but horror comics were in vogue, so he soon died out.

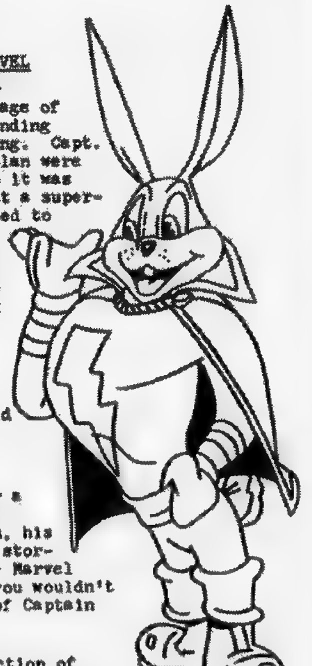
Super-animals have come and gone, over the years, as have human super heroes. As we class human heroes in a Golden Age, so must we the animals; for they too are a part of the comic media. Certainly, in that animal Golden Age, there can be no doubt that Cosmo Cat ranks as one of the best. I know too, that when I recall my more formative comic reading years, I must class Cosmo Cat as one of my all time favorites.





Hoppy

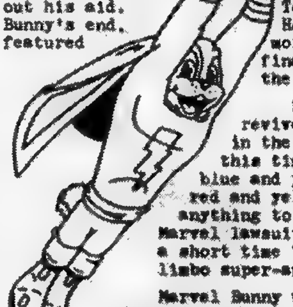
CAPT. MARVEL BUNNY



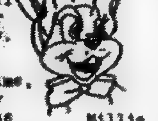
It was the age of Shazam and a blinding flash of lightning. Capt. Marvel and his clan were riding high. So it was only natural that a super-animal was created to please Fawcett's younger readers. (Some older too, for that matter.) When shy little Hoppy the rabit said Shazam, he became in a blinding flash of lightning a mighty, flying cottontail - Capt. Marvel Bunny. When evil had been defeated and justice restored, Marvel Bunny had only to repeat the word to change back to Hoppy. This secret could never be revealed to anyone or Hoppy would lose his power.

Marvel Bunny appeared in Fawcett's Funny Animals and, for a short time, in his own magazine. Although he was the star of both, his alter ego got top billing. His stories were all titled, "Hoppy, the Marvel Bunny". I suppose this was so you wouldn't confuse his magazine with that of Captain Marvel, or any of his clan.

Marvel Bunny has the destinction of being perhaps the only regularly featured super-animal to appear with a human super hero. He once appeared with Mary Marvel (Capt. Marvel's sister) in an other-dimension adventure.



Marvel Bunny didn't appear in all of the Hoppy adventures. Sometimes Hoppy and his girlfriend Millie managed to get in and out of trouble, without his aid. Toward Marvel Bunny's end, Hoppy was being featured more and more, until finally he took over the strip completely.

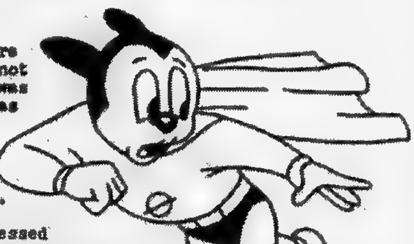


Millie

Marvel Bunny was revived for a short time, in the late 50's. Only this time his costume was blue and yellow, rather than red and yellow. I wonder if this change had anything to do with the Superman, Captain Marvel lawsuit. In any event, he lasted only a short time before fading back into whatever limbo super-animals go to.

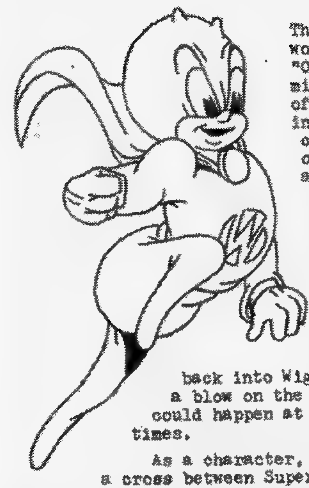
Marvel Bunny wasn't the only super-animal featured by Fawcett. There was a less famous, but just as heroic character, known as Sir Spot. He will be featured later in this series.

Super Pup

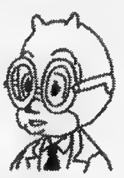


For every great super-animal, there are probably ten who are not so great. Super Pup was one of the ten. He was published by Avon Periodicals, around 1953 or so. Like many of his super cousins, he could fly, had X-ray vision, was invulnerable and possessed super strength. However, the thing that made Cosmo Cat, Marvel Bunny and many others great, was lacking - good art and original story plot. It was this type of character that was written solely for children.

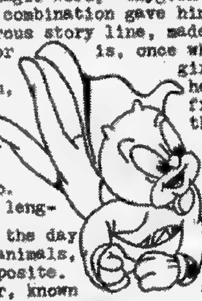
WONDERWORM



Omygosh! It's Wonderworm. That's right, a super-worm. A worm who, whenever he cried, "Omygosh", became endowed with mighty powers. (Strength, power of flight, etc.) Wonderworm was in reality, Wiggles the worm, a clerk for Grouchy Rat, president of a big business in Happy Village. Wiggles only changed to Wonderworm when he was in personal danger. He wasn't aware, that when he yelled "Omygosh", he was changing into Wonderworm. This situation meant many narrow escapes for him. Wonderworm was changed back into Wiggles only by a blow on the head and that could happen at the darndest times.



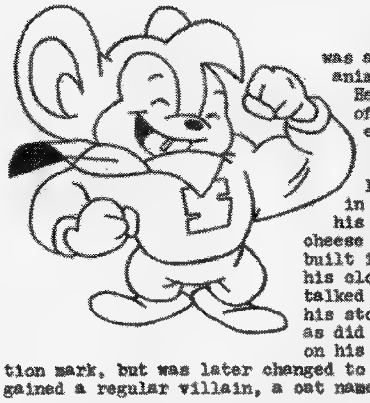
As a character, Wonderworm was a cross between Superman and Capt. Marvel. His alter ego, Wiggles, paraleled Superman's alter ego of Clark Kent; while his magic word, "Omygosh", was reminiscent of Capt. Marvel. This combination gave him a certain appeal, and along with a humorous story line, made good reading. A typical example of this humor is, once when Wonderworm was in a hurry to rescue his girlfriend, Giggles, from a ball and chain, he took off without first releasing her from the ball. Airborne, he commented on the fact that Giggles was putting on weight.



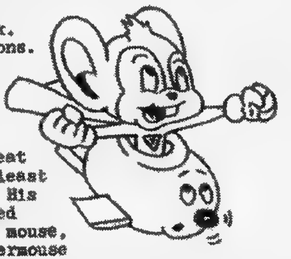
Wonderworm appeared in Taffy Comics and was published by Taffy Pub. He was also one of the first to have book length stories.

Like the human heroes of the day who were being slowly replaced by funny animals, so was he; only his case was just the opposite. He was being slowly replaced by a teen-ager, known as Taffy Tucker. There's a morral in that somewhere.

SUPERMOUSE



Supermouse, the big cheese, was another popular super-animal in the 40's and 50's. He gained his super powers of strength, flight, X-ray eyes, etc, from eating Supercheese. One bite of this cheese and he could lick an army. He was aided, in his fight against evil by his plane, known as the Supercheese Special. (Supermouse had built it to save wear and tear on his cloak.) This plane even talked to him. Over the years, his stories matured with the times as did his costume. The insignia on his first costume was a question mark, but was later changed to a big yellow S. He also gained a regular villain, a cat named Terrible Tom.

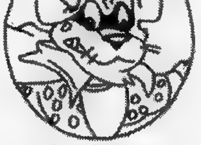


Supermouse was featured in Coo Coo Comics and later in his own book. He was published by Nedor Publications. The same people who published the famous Black Terror. Later in the 50's he was published under the Standard Comics label.

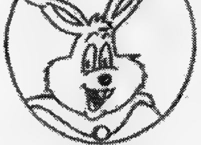
Supermouse was billed as a great fighter, but he was also a great lover. To my knowledge, he had at least two girlfriends during his career. His first one a redhead (non mouse) named Annabel. The second, a dark haired mouse, named Mabel. I for one am glad Supermouse was a good lover, for as a fighter, I don't think he would have lasted one round with Cosmo Cat.

So ends Part 1 of "The First Inhumans". I hope I have given you some insight into the world of lighter reading.

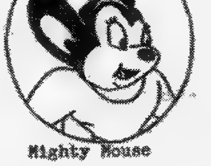
PART 2 FEATURES:



Sir Spot

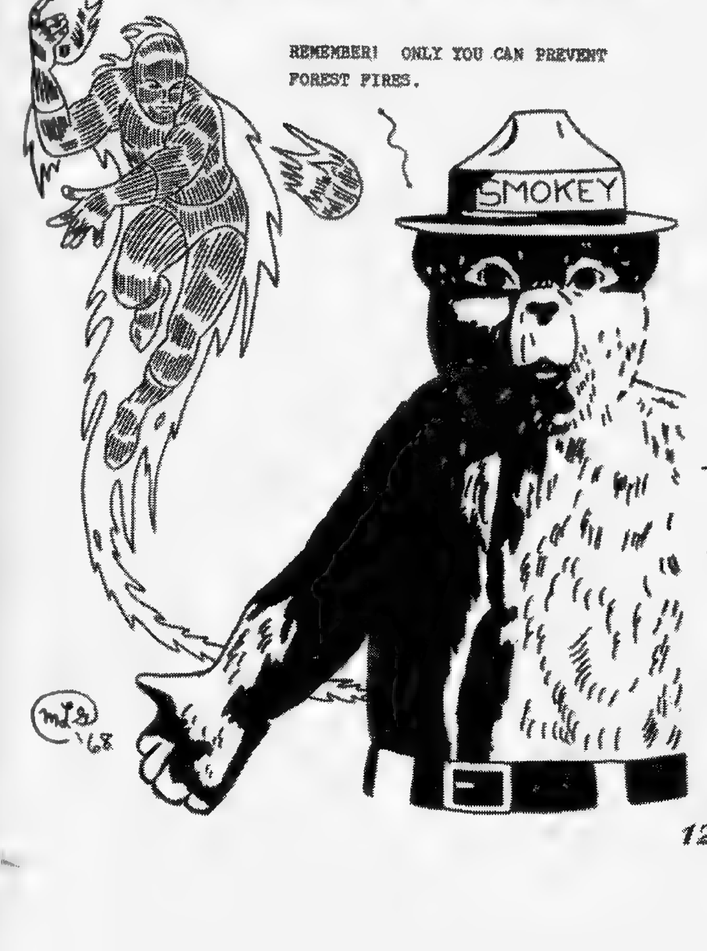


Super Rabbit



Mighty Mouse

The COMIC CORNER



REMEMBER! ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT FOREST FIRES.

SHORTHAND.:/

By John Lawrence

A regular feature, containing bits of information on various super heroes.

"THE END OF SPY SMASHER."

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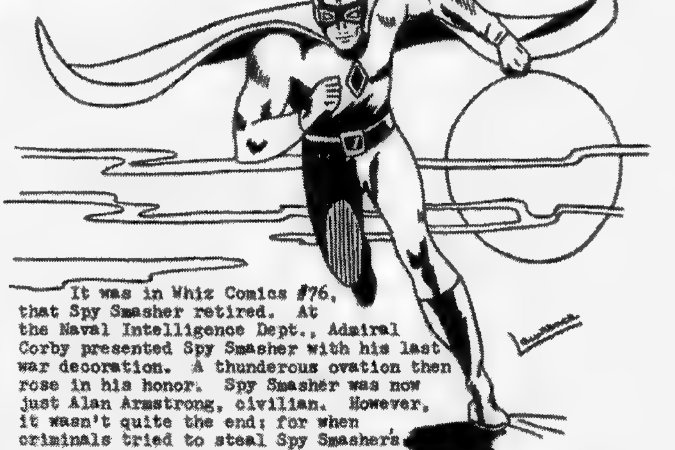
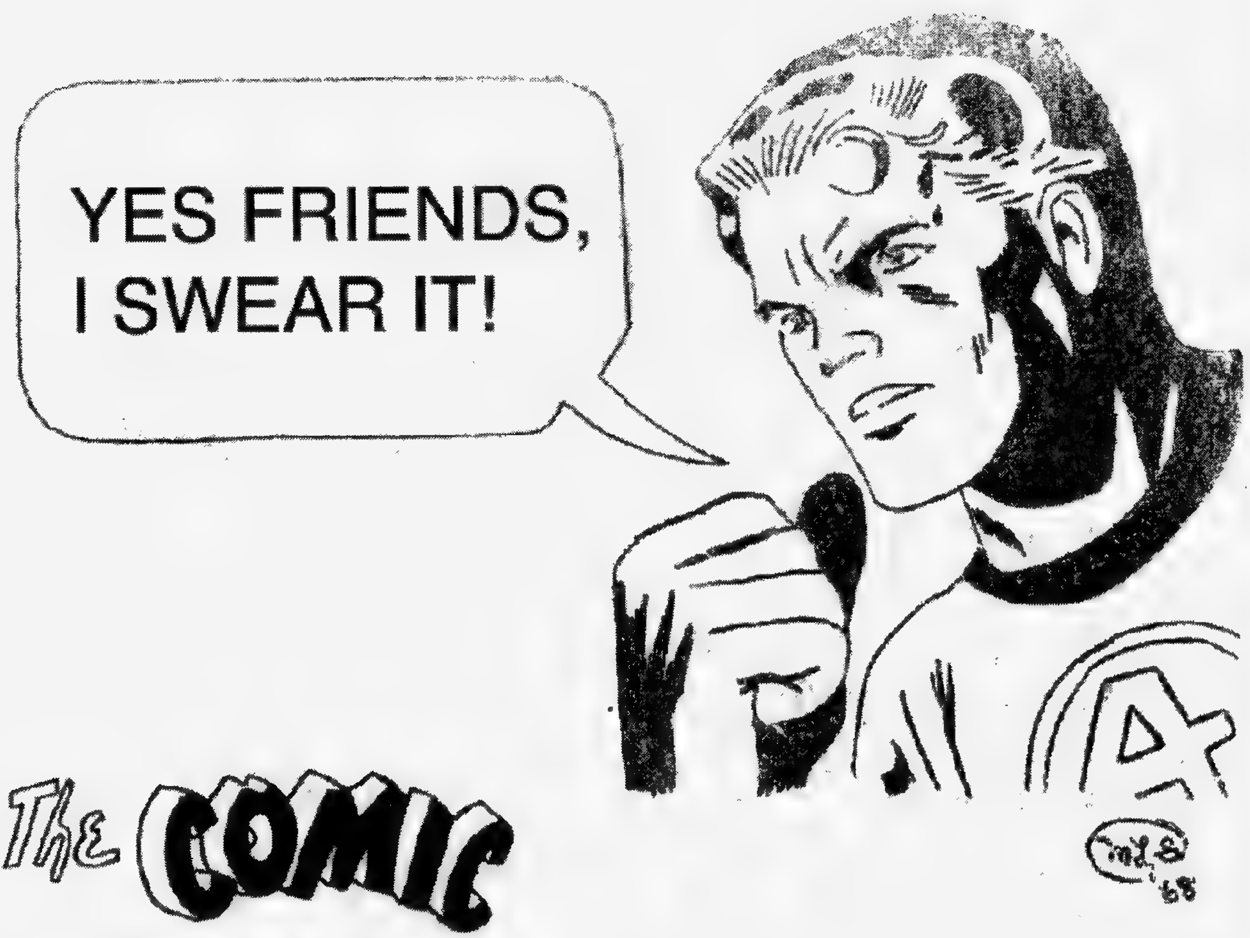


It was in Whiz Comics #76, that Spy Smasher retired. At the Naval Intelligence Dept., Admiral Corby presented Spy Smasher with his last war decoration. A thunderous ovation then rose in his honor. Spy Smasher was now just Alan Armstrong, civilian. However, it wasn't quite the end; for when criminals tried to steal Spy Smasher's plans for his famous Gyro-Sub, he swung into action against Jasper Jaww, a criminal patent agent. After a short battle, he turned Jaww and his gang, over to the police. It was then Alan Armstrong decided to become a private detective and to call himself.....CRIME SMASHER.


YES FRIENDS, I SWEAR IT!
M.S. '68

The COMIC CRUSADER

Sorry about the delay for this issue, friends, but the printer really fouled me up. I promise this won't happen again. I am happy to say this first issue has been practically a sell-out. I hope you enjoy it enough to order issue #2, ready June 15th. (See next page for ad.)

The reason for the mailing space on the back page is because I originally planned to mail this zine folded, but I received so many requests for it to be mailed flat, I decided to make up a ditto sheet and do just that. After issue #2 that space will be no more.

Next issue will have a letter page and will be a ditto one, so the letters will be as new as possible and it will also save the offset part of the zine for artwork and articles. So start writing and watch this page next issue.

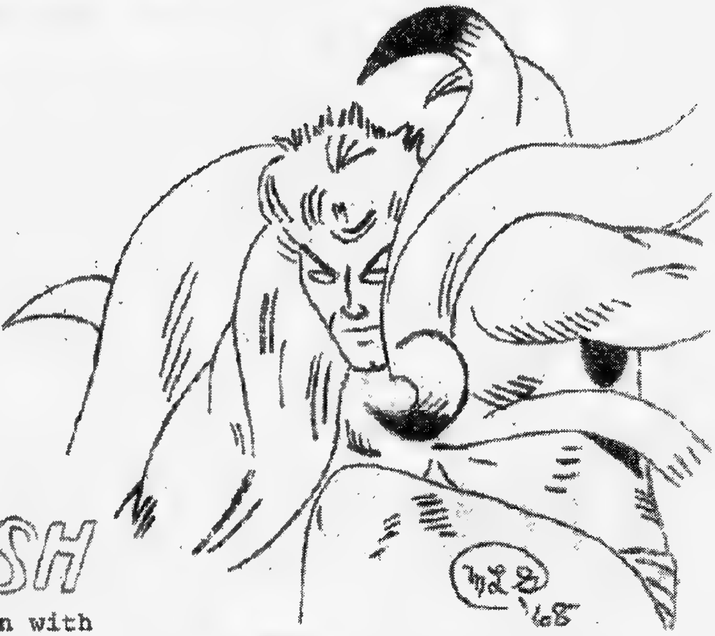
The Comic Crusader 25 ¢

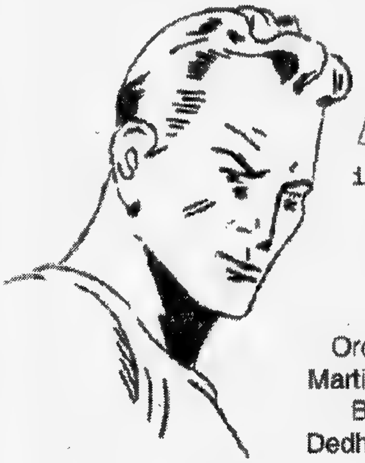
CREEP

into adventure with

Steve Ditko

man of mystery.





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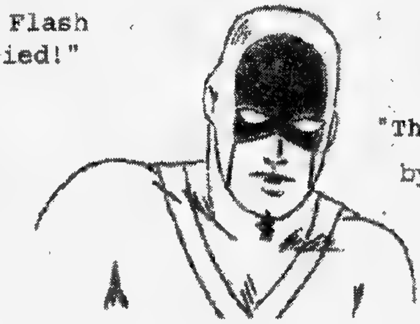

DEFEND

yourself with
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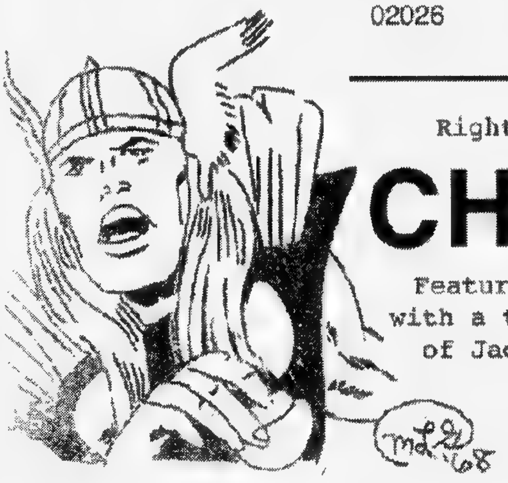
by Martin L. Greim
and
Larry Herndon



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1940 - 1968.

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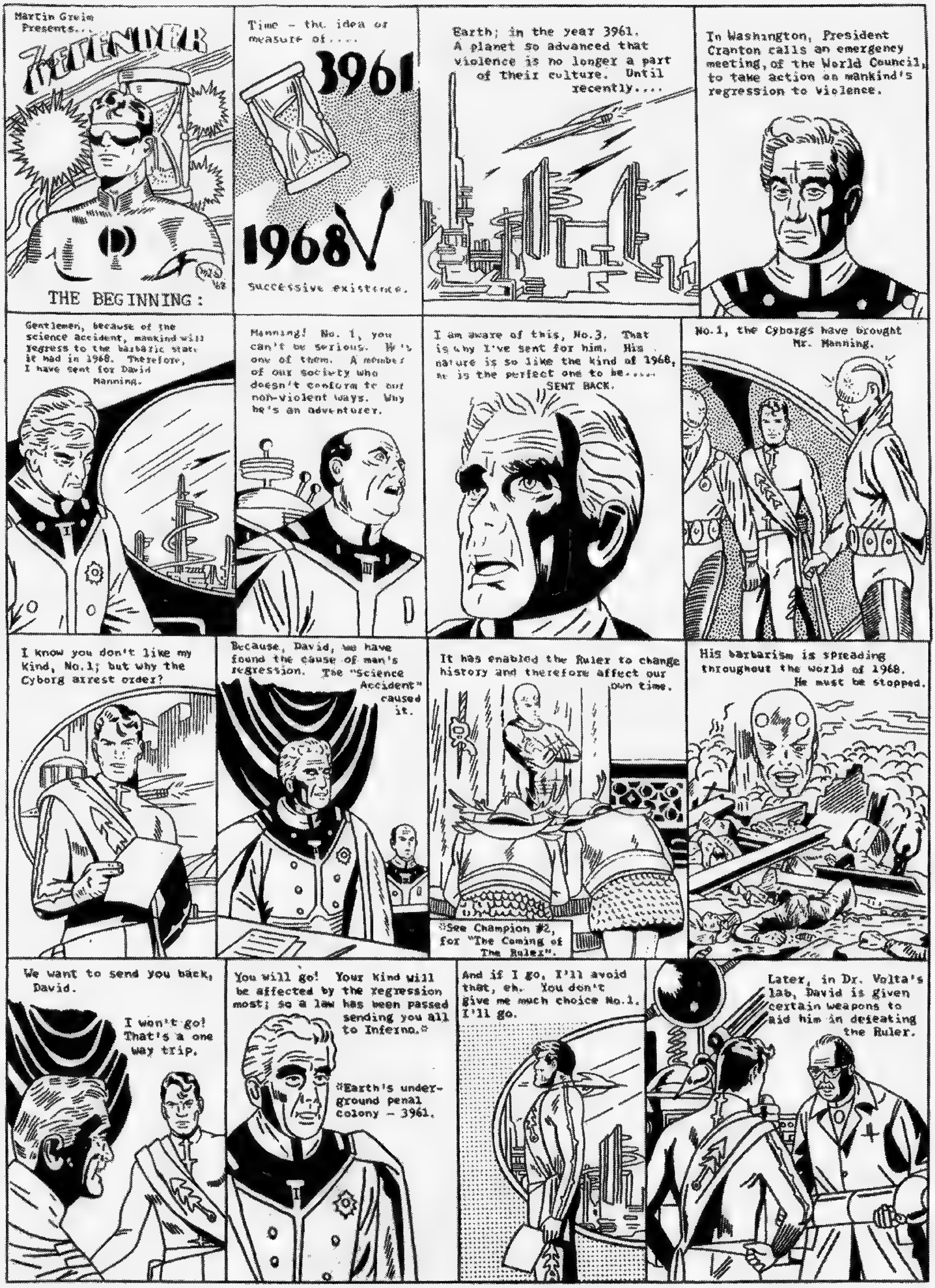
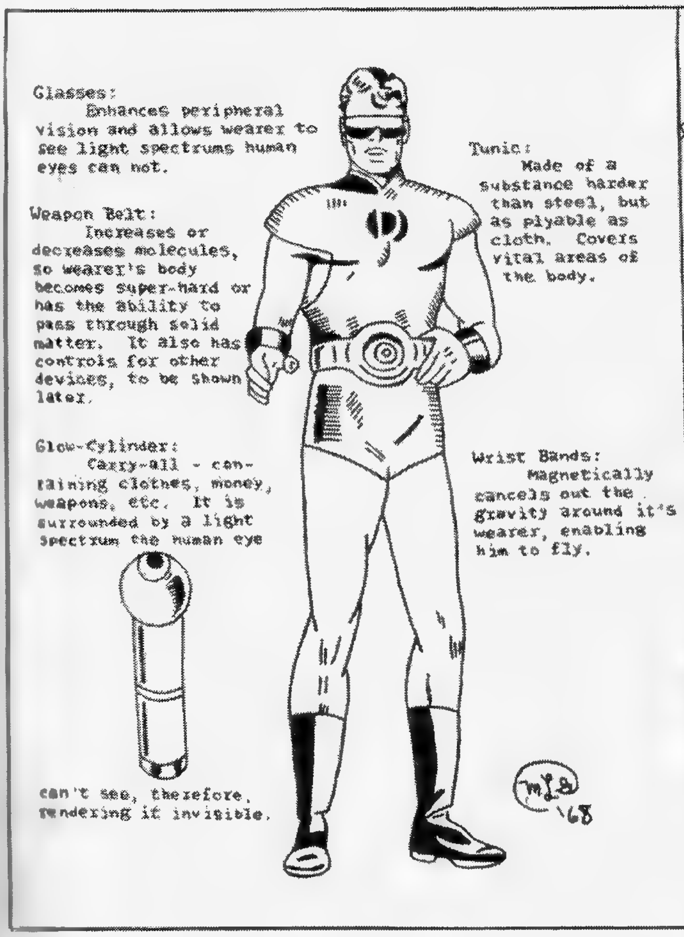
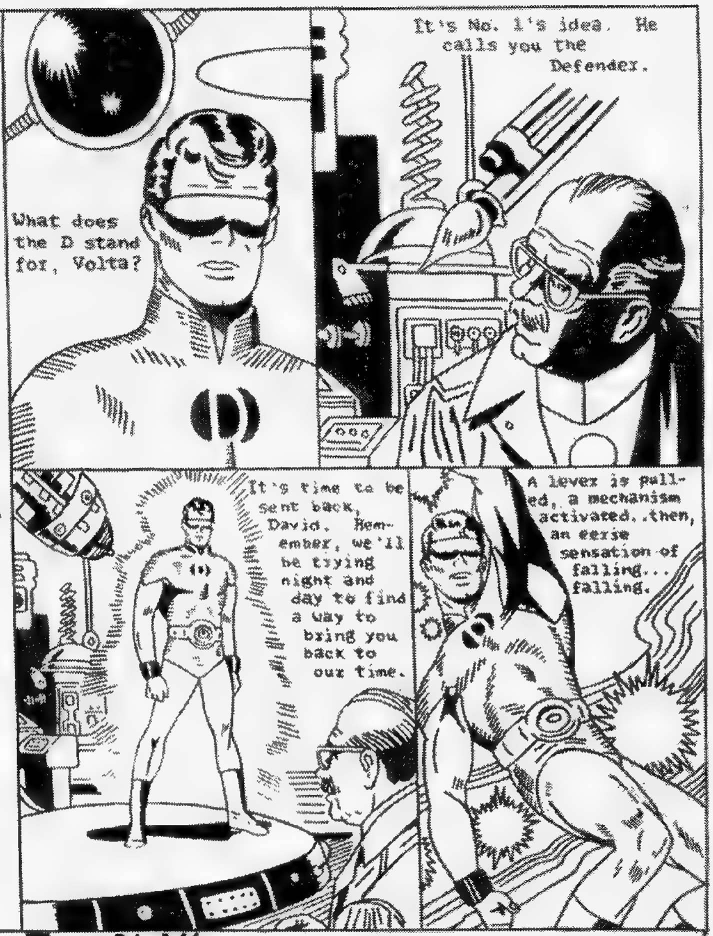
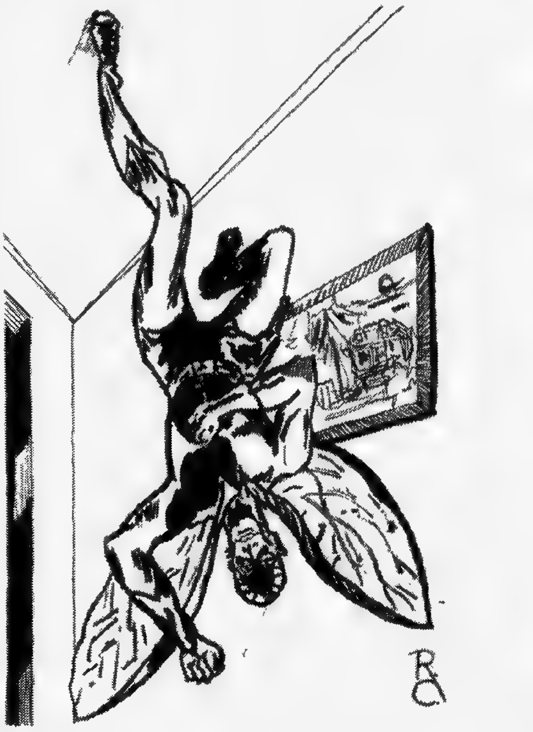

Martin Greim
Presents...
The DEFENDER
THE BEGINNING:
Time – the idea or measure of....
3961
1968
successive existence.
Earth; in the year 3961. A planet so advanced that violence is no longer a part of their culture. Until recently....
In Washington, President Cranton calls an emergency meeting, of the World Council, to take action on mankind's regression to violence.
Gentlemen, because of the science accident, mankind will regress to the barbaric state it had in 1968. Therefore, I have sent for David Manning.
Manning! No. 1, you can't be serious. He's one of them. A member of our society who doesn't conform to our non-violent ways. Why he's an adventurer.
I am aware of this, No.3. That is why I've sent for him. His nature is so like the kind of 1968, he is the perfect one to be..... SENT BACK.
No.1, the Cyborgs have brought Mr. Manning.
I know you don't like my Kind, No.1; but why the Cyborg arrest order?
Because, David, we have found the cause of man's regression. The "Science Accident" caused it.
It has enabled the Ruler to change history and therefore affect our own time.
*See Champion #2, for "The Coming of The Ruler".
His barbarism is spreading throughout the world of 1968. He must be stopped.
We want to send you back, David.
I won't go! That's a one way trip.
You will go! Your kind will be affected by the regression most; so a law has been passed sending you all to Inferno.*
*Earth's underground penal colony – 3961.
And if I go, I'll avoid that, eh. You don't give me much choice No.1. I'll go.
Later, in Dr. Volta's lab, David is given certain weapons to aid him in defeating the Ruler.

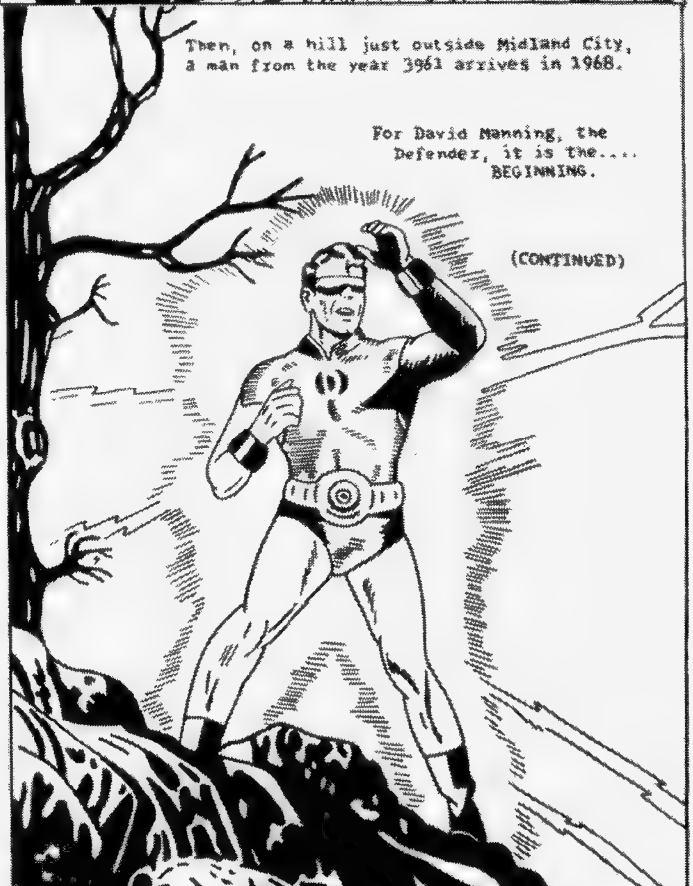

Glasses:
Enhances peripheral vision and allows wearer to see light spectrums human eyes can not.
Weapon Belt:
Increases or decreases molecules, so wearer's body becomes super-hard or has the ability to pass through solid matter. It also has controls for other devices, to be shown later.
Glow-Cylinder:
Carry-all - containing clothes, money, weapons, etc. It is surrounded by a light spectrum the human eye can't see, therefore, rendering it invisible.
Tunic:
Made of a substance harder than steel, but as plyable as cloth. Covers vital areas of the body.
Wrist Bands:
Magnetically cancels out the gravity around it's wearer, enabling him to fly.
mLa '68


What does the D stand for, Volta?
It's No. 1's idea. He calls you the Defender.
It's time to be sent back, David. Remember, we'll be trying night and day to find a way to bring you back to our time.
A lever is pulled, a mechanism activated...then, an eerie sensation of falling... falling.

THE FLY

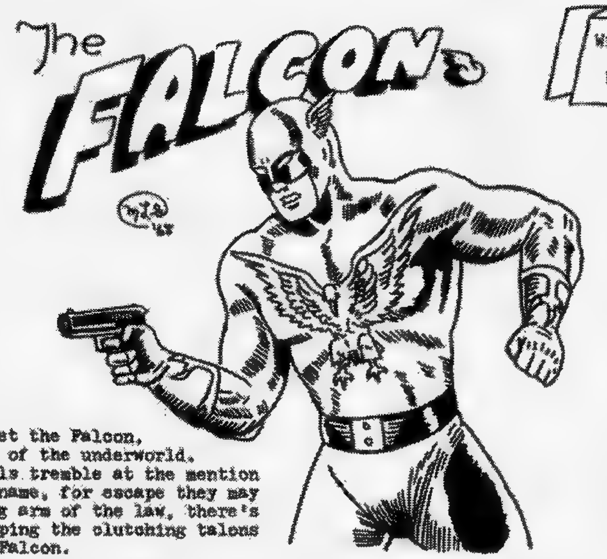
This drawing is by my friend and chief-editor of Champion, (C.C.'s companion magazine) Bob Cosgrove. I always get a boot out of Bob's artwork, for his style is somewhat like Kirby's. He also has this thing, where he draws himself as a well known super hero. (See Champ. #1&2.) This never fails to break me up. He has a great deal of imagination and many of his ideas have inspired my own work for his zine. I hope to have a lot more contributions from him in future issues. - ed.




Then, on a hill just outside Midland City, a man from the year 3961 arrives in 1968.
For David Manning, the Defender, it is the.... BEGINNING.
(CONTINUED)

The FALCON

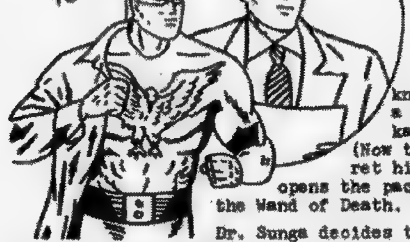
Written and Drawn
by
Martin L. Greim



Meet the Falcon, nemesis of the underworld. Criminals tremble at the mention of his name, for escape they may the long arm of the law, there's no escaping the clutching talons of the Falcon.

What you have just read is the introduction given the Falcon in Daring Mystery Comics #5. (One of the Marvel Comics Group, published during the forties.) The Falcon was, in civilian life, Carl Burgess, a brilliant young assistant district attorney. As far as I know he had no origin. His first case, however, concerned a grim little item known as "The Wand of Death".

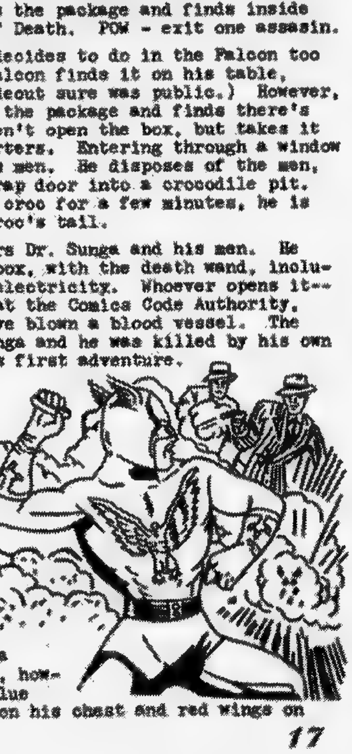
It seems that a villian named Dr. Sunga was sending a wand, with a skull's head and bat's wings on it, to all his enemies. As soon as they opened the box and touched it, they would die. The Falcon, in his guise of Carl Burgess, accused Sunga of murder, but Sunga laughed, knowing that he couldn't go to trial for killing a man with a curse. Burgess leaves and becomes the Falcon. Dr. Sunga gets news that the Falcon is after him and sends a man to kill him. Now the Falcon's assasin has a brilliant plan; he chops down a tree and tries to land it on the Falcon's car. Naturally he failed. You just couldn't get competent assasins during the 40's.



Anyway, the Falcon captures the assasin and takes him to his secret hideout. He is just about to make him talk, when there is a knock at the door. It's a delivery man with a package for the assasin. (Now that's what I call a secret hideout.) The assasin opens the package and finds inside the Wand of Death. POW - exit one assasin.

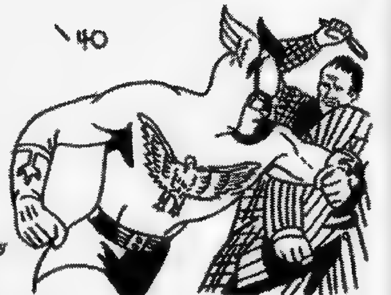
Dr. Sunga decides to do in the Falcon too and sends him a package. The Falcon finds it on his table, later that day. (That secret hideout sure was public.) However, the Falcon's no dope. He x-rays the package and finds there's a Wand of Death inside. He dosen't open the box, but takes it with him to Dr. Sunga's headquarters. Entering through a window the Falcon attacks Sunga and his men. He disposes of the men, but Sunga drops him through a trap door into a crocodile pit. After thrashing it out with the croc for a few minutes, he is tossed out of the pit, by the croc's tail.

The Falcon grabs a gun and covers Dr. Sunga and his men. He tells Sunga that he knows each box, with the death wand, includes a killing charge of static electricity. Whoever opens it--dies. It was at this point, that the Comics Code Authority, had they existed then, would have blown a blood vessel. The Falcon tossed the box at Dr. Sunga and he was killed by his own science. So endith the Falcon's first adventure.



It should be noted, that though the preceding story seems a might childish, compared with the stories Marvel turns out today; it was, after all, written for children and contained many action scenes.

The Falcon returned again in Daring Mystery #6, but this time both the art and the story were greatly improved. In his first adventure, his costume consisted of a red headpiece and gloves, a blue costume and a yellow falcon cest emblem. Now, however, his costume was a light blue grey, with a red falcon emblem on his chest and red wings on his headpiece. His gloves were yellow, with a red trim of falcon's claws.



The story in Daring Mystery #6, told of how the Falcon uncovered a plot to rob a bank. There were well drawn fight scenes and a wild gun battle. The Falcon was one of the few costumed heroes who used a gun. It was also in this issue that he used gas bombs to force the bandits, who had dug their way into a bank, back into the waiting arms of the police.

The Falcon was also in Human Torch #1. In this story he foiled a kidnap plan by painting the ransom money suitcase with luminous paint and following the kidnapper. After a short battle, he freed the kidnap victim and all was well. The second two stories I've mentioned were much better written than the first one, but the Falcon just hadn't caught on and was discontinued. So ended the short career of the Falcon. I wonder though, if he were brought back by Marvel today, if he wouldn't be a hit.

The End.

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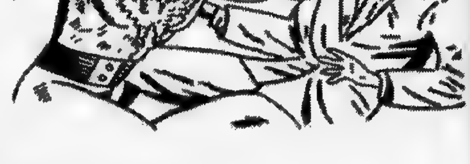

Who do you want profiled in the next "History's Heroes"? Write this magazine and let me know.

Martin L. Greim
Box 132
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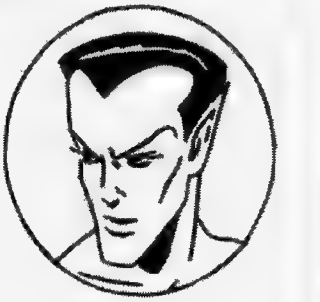
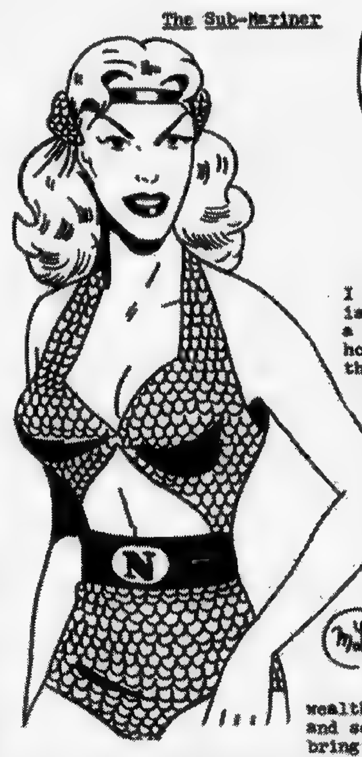
HISTORY'S HELPERS

By Martin L. Greim

The Sub-Mariner





NAMORA

I picked Namora for this first issue, because Bill Everett is a personal favorite of mine. I hope I do justice to Namora in this limited space.

Namora, or Aquaria Nautica Neptunia, as was her real name, began her career in Marvel Mystery Comics #82. She appeared on its cover along with the Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch. She joined Namor because she was the sole survivor of an undersea massacre that destroyed many of the Sub-Mariner's people. It seems a criminal named "Stoop" Richards led his men, in diving gear, into the undersea city and plundered all of its wealth. Namor found Namora wounded and soon after, they teamed up to bring the criminals to justice. When the Sub-Mariner was revived in the middle 50's, so was Namora; only this time she was his cousin.

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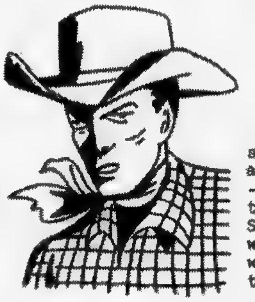
COMIC CHATTER

Because this is the first issue of The Comic Crusader there is, of course, no letter column. In the future, however, I will devote a page to LOC's and any interesting news I might come across concerning the comic media. News, such as the following:

Item - Have you seen the new Penguin Book of Comics, by George Perry and Alan Aldridge. It is a great, illustrated paper back book on comics; from their begining to todays vogue of comics for the adult reader. It is 256 pages in length and has many sections of "Golden Age" material. It also has material on newspaper strips, English comics and the comics of today. (Marvel, National, etc.) There is even a section on movie super heroes. For $4.50 it's a great buy. If you can't find it in your local book store, try writing..............Penguin Books Inc.

3300 Clipper Mill Rd.
Baltimore, Md.
21211

Item - If you think the drawing of the cowboy looks a lot like the Sub-Mariner.... you're right. I was looking through some old comics of mine and came across a strip, in Target Comics #4, called Bull's-Eye Bill.



The strip was signed by Blake, but it is unmistakably Bill Everett's work. Old Bull's-Eye talked with a real western twang and looked enough like the Sub-Mariner to be his brother. Hmm - I wonder if Commander McKenzie ever went out west after his expedition to the Antarctic?

Item - Did you know Robert Culp, star of TV's "I Spy", is a collector of Big Little Books. He has quite a large collection and as a matter of fact he's even written an "I Spy" script based on one of the books.

Item - For those of you who enjoy a good game, you might try picking up John Stanley and Mal Whyte's "The Great Comics Game". It's a paperback containing 183 questions and illos on comics. Just so you won't go nuts trying to answer them, the answers are at the back of the book. It's published by:

Price/Stern/Sloan
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410 No. LaCienega Blvd.,
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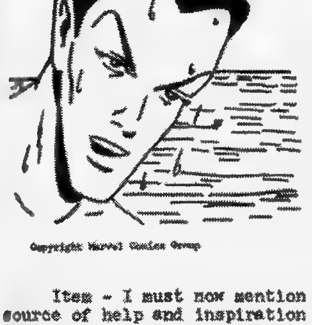
90048.



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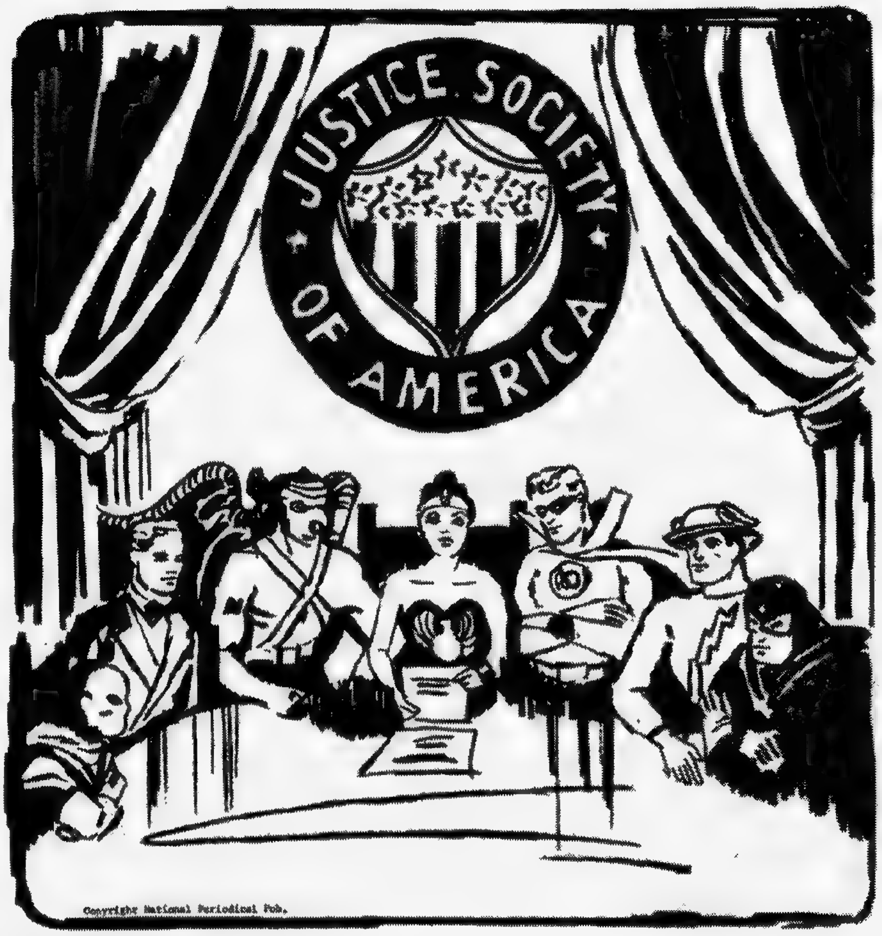
Item - By the way, for all you Sub-Mariner fans, I hope you have gotten issue #2 of Champion. (I've ordered 20 myself.) It features an article and artwork, by myself, on "The Water World of Bill Everett". It also contains an interview with Mr. Everett on his water heroes. So if you haven't already - order 5 or 6 from:

Bob Cosgrove
58 Mass. Ave.
Braintree, Mass.
02185.

Item - I must now mention a man who has been a great source of help and inspiration to me. I must mention him or never set foot in his store again - Stan Darcy. He's got a lot of "Golden Age" goodies, so write:

Stan's Magazine Exchange
Box 62,
Brockton, Mass.



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Well that's all for this issue, gang. I hope you liked it. Next issue will be truly great, so order it right away, before some relative of mine grabs off the whole lot.

Send your letters of comment to:

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Comic Crusader Vol.1, No. 1

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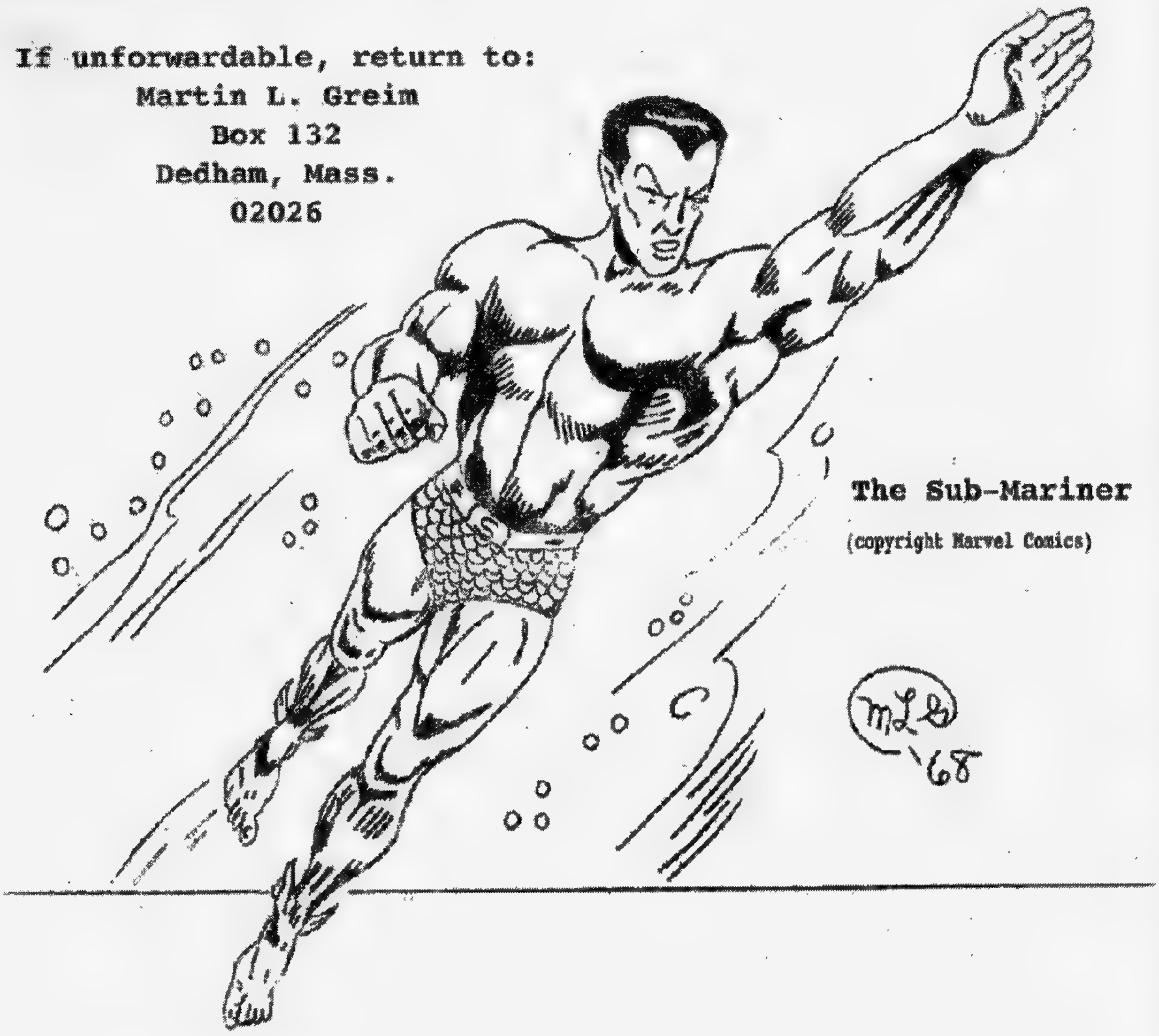

The Sub-Mariner

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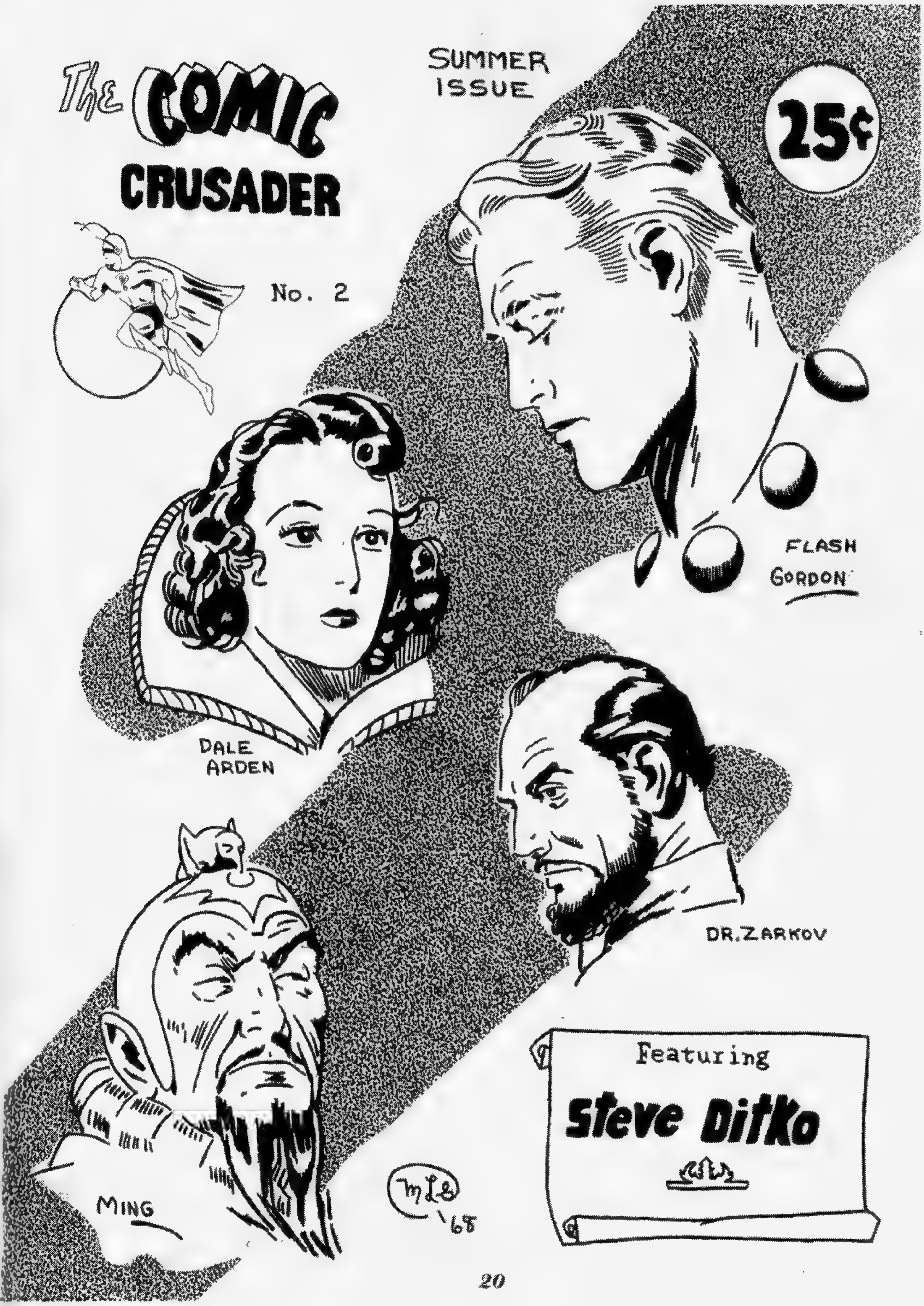
TO:

Best always
M.L.G.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Featuring
Steve Ditko
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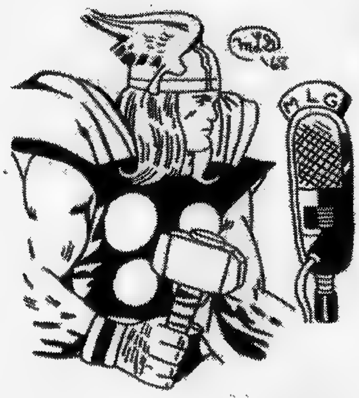


CRUSADER COMMENTS

Welcome to issue #2 of The Comic Crusader, the Readers Digest of fandom. I would like to thank all the readers of issue #1, for your many words of encouragement. In future issues I will try to justify your faith in this zine. For this issue, I've found two new art contributors; Diana Salford and Pal. Info on Diana appears with her Wonder Woman drawing and as for info on Pal (See the Black Condor drawing on the back page) I can't give you any. He's a friend of mine and prefers that I do not give out his name. So, if I want to get any more art work from him, I'd better honor that request.

I've had a few letters asking if I'm still going to do work for Bob Cosgrove, editor of this zine's companion zine. The answer is DEFINITELY YES! After all, I'm art editor of Champion, you know; and besides Bob is a friend of mine.

Hey gang! It's almost SCARP time. (July 4-7) This group, led by Phil Seuling, has one of the greatest Con's, I've ever heard of, planned for this summer. It's going to be held at the Statler Hilton, in New York City and has a very impressive line up of pro guests; as well as a luncheon with them. For reservations send $4.00 to Bill Parente, 15-D Arcadia Rd; Hackensack, N.J. I know I'm going--See you there?

In passing, you might have noticed, from this issue and the last, that I am a Flash Gordon buff. Therefore, it's only natural that I bring to your attention a little matter of a $12.45 book on him, by Nostalgia Press. (If you haven't seen an ad for this, where have you been?) I've got my copy and I can only tell you it's great. The reproduction of the Alex Raymond Sunday strip is perfect. This is a must for any serious comic collector. Send $12.45 to Nostalgia Press, P.O. Box 293, Franklin Square, New York. 11010. You won't regret it.

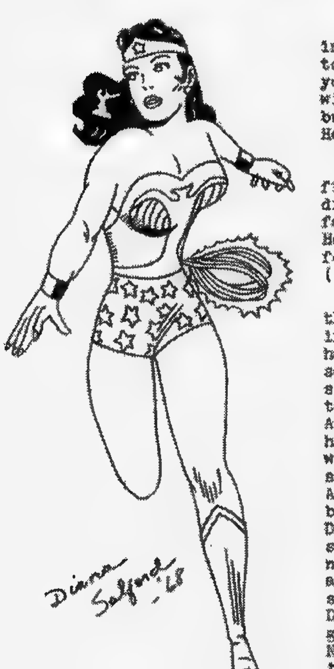
I've been asked, on various occasions, who my favorite amateur artist is? Well, in answer, I can only say, John Fantucchio. His style really turns me on. I thought his cover for Bob Schoenfeld's Comic Reader #66 (The Black Terror) was his greatest work to date. Someday soon, I'd like to do a feature on him.

In future issues, of the Comic Crusader, I'd like to profile more of fandom's amateur contributors. I believe if we get to know each other better, it will bring fandom a little closer together. After all, we all have the same interests, so why not share our hobby. One of the reasons I feature Golden Age heroes, in this zine, is because I believe many fans can't afford, or are unable to find, comics of this era. I have many Golden age mags, so why not share the information I have at hand, with fandom. In this way fandom gets a background on their hobby and a basis for enjoying the heroes of today. The pages of this zine are always open to anything that interests fans. However, I do try to condense the facts a little, so as to present more material. (Although, if I feel a subject warrants it, I will devote more space to it. Such as next issues Con report.) So, with this in mind, you see why I refer to The Comic Crusader as The Readers Digest of Fandom.

The next issue of The Comic Crusader, will be out in Oct. Now don't let my relatives get the jump on you. When you see the ad in "Rocket's Blast", send your order in. Don't be left out. Yours 'til next time, Martin L. Greim -ed.

The Comic Crusader, Vol. 1 #2, June 1968. Pub. 4 times a year by Martin L. Greim, Box 132, Dedham, Mass. 02026. as a non profit enterprise for students of comic art. Price 25¢ per copy. Contributors: Bob Cosgrove, Larry Herndon, Pal, Diana Salford and John Lawrence

Wonder Woman



Recently, while searching for artists to contribute to this zine, I found that a young lady, I went to school with, could not only draw, but was a comic fan as well. Her name, Diana Salford.

Diana, took time out, from being a housewife, to draw one of her childhood favorites, Wonder Woman. Her talent at drawing the female form became obvious. (Ah, yes!)

I believe, as does Diana, that Wonder Woman has a place in comics today; if only she had decent stories. I daresay, even I could write better stories, than those being turned out for her today. Also, until recently, D.C. has played down her weaknesses, which gave suspense to her stories. Back in the Golden Age, men had to chain her bracelets together (not weld D.C.) to deprive her of her strength. She was also vulnerable to electric shock and a blow at the base of the skull. The bigest mistake D.C. has made, though, was to give W.W.'s mother blond hair. Now you can't really believe they're mother and daughter. I wonder if Hippolyte believes blonds have more fun. D.C. take note. - ed.

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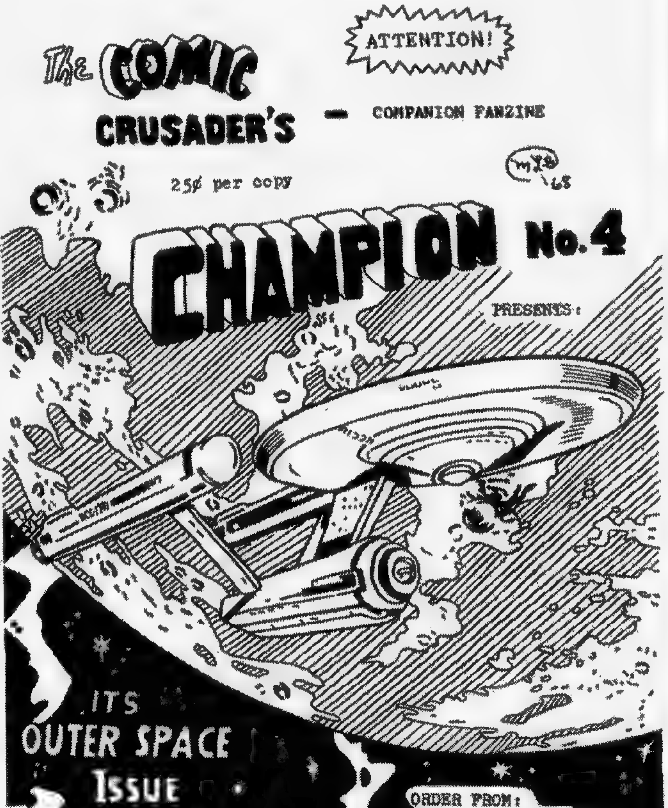
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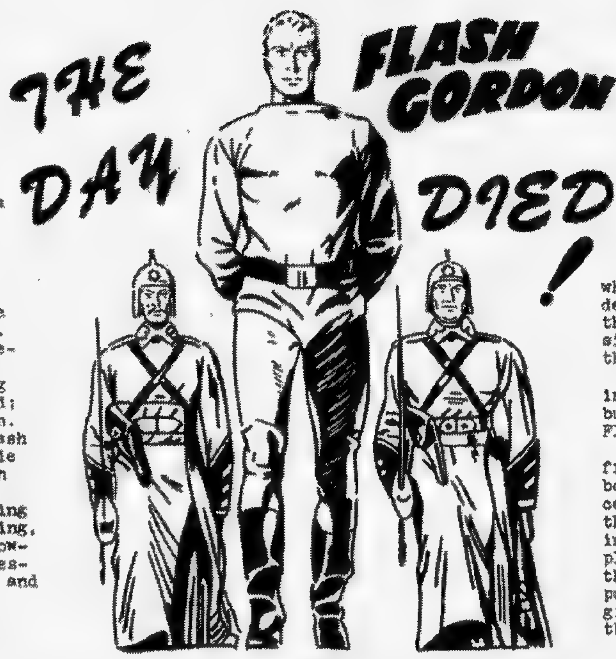
Written and Drawn
by
Martin L. Greim

(Mongo Mania)
#2

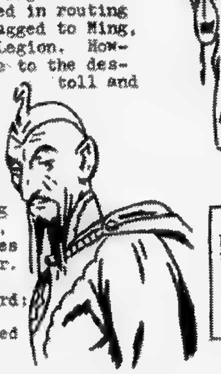
THE DAY FLASH GORDON DIED!



Alex Raymond was, as well as being a tremendous artist, an inspired story teller. His Flash Gordon strip was one of the most imaginative and exciting series ever written. When reading his stories, you seem to become part of them; to be drawn up into the action, so to speak.

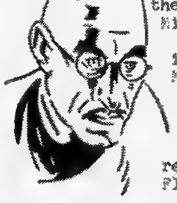
In 1939, "Perils of Mongo" was released, in a Whitman Big Little Book. In this book, one of the most exciting of the Flash Gordon sequences was told; Mings public execution of Flash Gordon.

Up to the time of this story, Flash Gordon had been clenched in a do or die struggle with Ming the Merciless; each trying to break each others might. Finally Ming's forces succeed in routing Flash's men and Flash is dragged to Ming, by Captain Grombo's Desert Legion. However exhaustion and exposure to the desert sun have taken their toll and Flash lies near death. Ming is enraged at Captain Grombo, for bringing Flash to him in this condition. Angered at the thought of Flash dieing before he can extract revenge on him, Ming reduces Grombo to the ranks, has him flogged and sentances him to six months hard labor. Ming then sends Flash to Mongo's hospital, under guard; so that he will be fit to suffer the fate he has planed for him.



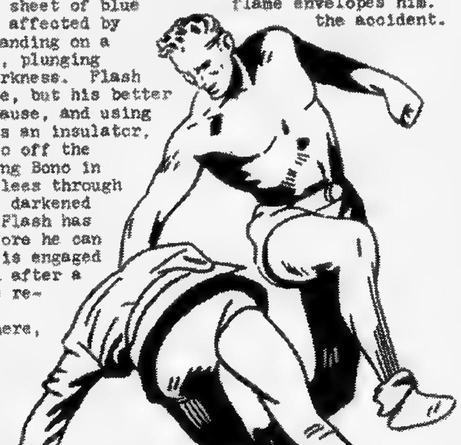
Characters pictured in this story are:
Flash Gordon
Ming
Doctor Bono

Meanwhile, Dale Arden, Dr. Zarkov and Princess Aura (Ming's daughter, now married to King Barin, the rightful heir to the throne of Mongo.) head toward Mingo City, in an attempt to save Flash from being executed. However, the trio has a faulty map and they soon run out of water, while crossing the Mongo Desert. As they face death from thirst, some desert outlaws come to their aid and excort them to the outskirts of Mingo City.



By this time, Flash is feeling better and is getting to know his doctor, Doctor Bono. Ming is also getting to know the doctor. He makes frequent visits to the hospital, anxious to extract his vengeance as soon as possible. Bono, though respectful to Ming, feels sorry for Flash and tells Ming Flash's recovery is taking time. In reality, though, Flash is almost himself again.

Now the action begins. One day, while Flash is under a recovery ray, his guard carelessly allows his rifle to come too near to the huge million-volt electrodes of the thermo-ray and a sheet of blue flame envelopes him. Doctor Bono, too, is affected by the accident. He falls backward, landing on a heavily charged coil, plunging the hospital into darkness. Flash is now able to escape, but his better instincts make him pause, and using a rubber floor mat as an insulator, he scoops Doctor Bono off the charged wire. Leaving Bono in safety, Flash then flees through the corridors of the darkened hospital. However, Flash has waited too long; before he can make his escape, he is engaged by Ming's guards and after a furious battle, he's recaptured.



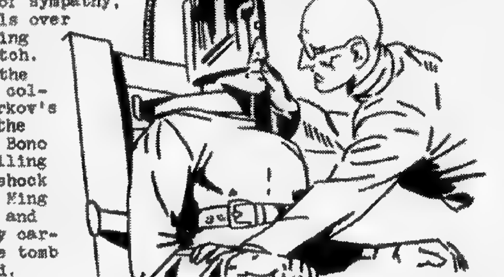
I should note here, that Alex Raymond's draftsman's art was really begining to show. It was clean, with backgrounds at their peak. Alex Raymond's art was Coming of age.

While Flash was battling in the hospital, Dale, Zarkov and Aura have befriended a local farmer and his wife. With their help, the trio enters Mingo City and Aura goes to Ming to plead for Flash's life. Ming, enraged at his daughters plea, sends her back to her husband, Barin, in his kingdom of Arboria. Dale, Zarkov and the farmer Luco disguise themselves and with a few of Luco's friends, try to rescue Flash. They almost make it, until deadly rays, from wall jets end their attempt. Only Dale, Zarkov, and Luco escape. The three manage to break into an armory and steal an armored car and uniforms, while outside the slow march of death begins for Flash. The throng that lines the way is strangely silent, for if Flash dies, so does their only hope for freedom.

Raymond's suspenseful scripting of the story was begining to build. Time was running out for Flash Gordon.

With the armored car, stolen from the armory, Zarkov pulls boldly into the middle of the procession. He tells Flash's guards that Ming has ordered them to ride in the armored car. The whole plan is ruined when, the Captain of the guard asks for orders and Luco pulls a ray gun. His rashness gives away the desperate scheme and they have to flee for their lives.

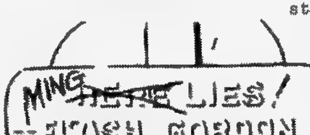
Suspense was at its peak. Flash Gordon took a deep breath and mounted the steps to his doom. In the public execution chamber Ming, the executioner, and Doctor Bono waited. Once inside the glassoid walls, the door is sealed and Flash is strapped to an electric chair. At this moment, Doctor Bono pretends to adjust Flash's head-piece and slips a pill into Flash's mouth.



A murmur of sympathy, for Flash, rolls over the crowd as Ming throws the switch. Disguised, in the audience, Dale collapses into Zarkov's arms. Inside the chamber Doctor Bono stops Ming; telling him the first shock killed Flash. Ming examines Flash and orders his body carried out to the tomb he has prepared.

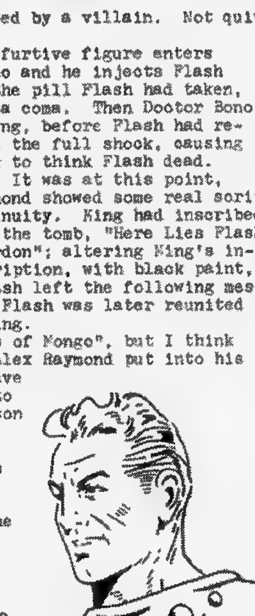
Yes friends, a comic first. A hero, publicly executed by a villain. Not quite though.

Later, the following evening, a furtive figure enters Flash Gordon's tomb. It's Doctor Bono and he injects Flash with a powerful antidote. It seems the pill Flash had taken, before he was executed, put him into a coma. Then Doctor Bono stoped Ming, before Flash had received the full shock, causing Ming to think Flash dead.



It was at this point, Raymond showed some real script inginuity. Ming had inscribed on the tomb, "Here Lies Flash Gordon"; altering Ming's inscription, with black paint, Flash left the following message. "Ming Lies! --Flash Gordon". Flash was later reunited with Dale and Zarkov for a happy ending.

This is but a portion of "Perils of Mongo", but I think it typifies the suspense and action Alex Raymond put into his stories. There have been many who have tried to imitate his style, but all to naught. Perhaps, though, Al Williamson has come the closest to the Raymond magnitude. His three Flash Gordon books, for King, are a proud addition to any Raymond collection. It's a shame he isn't doing any more today. It would be a great furtherance to the Flash Gordon legend.



The End.

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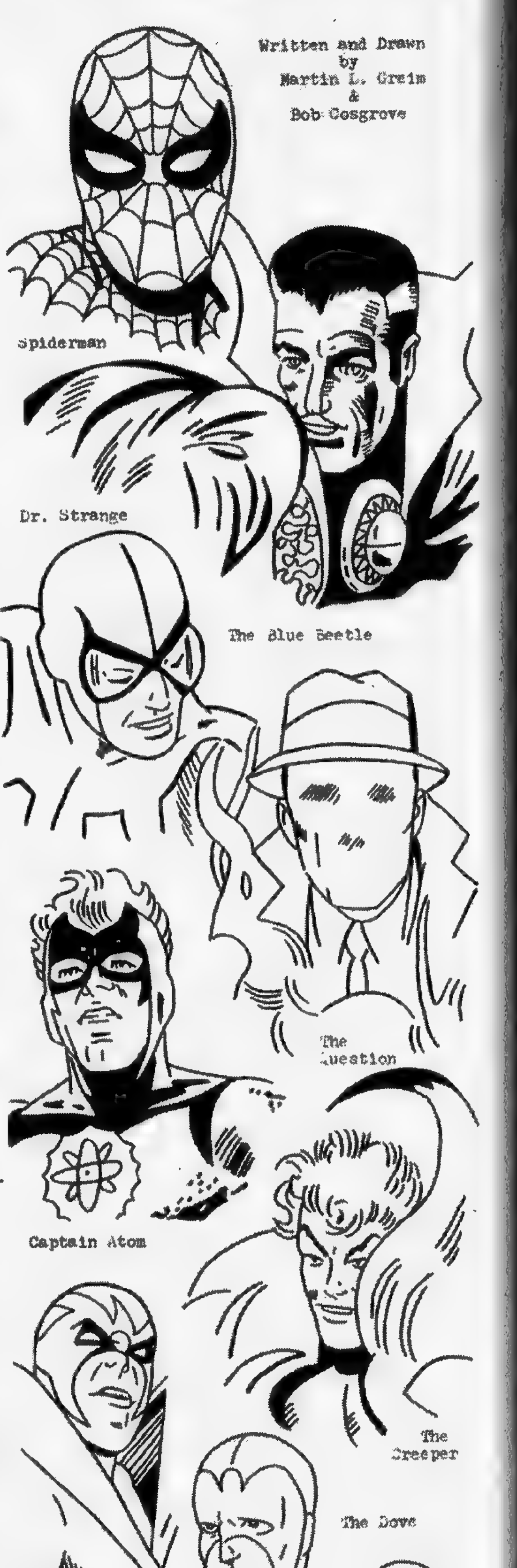
PROS & CONS

Steve Ditko
MAN OF MYSTERY

Written and Drawn
by
Martin L. Greim
&
Bob Cosgrove

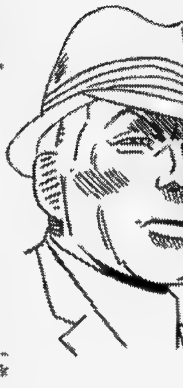
In the comic world, Steve Ditko is pretty much a man of mystery. Not much is known about his past, for as he puts it, "My work is me, I do my best and if I like it, I hope somebody else will like it". Steve is a popular artist in the comic field because his art is striking and original. If one was to describe his art, one might say it was soft looking, accented by toning effect. Once, when Steve was asked if he preferred brush to pen, when he was inking his drawings, he said, "No". He switches from one to the other only to break up the monotony. Steve enjoys both pencilling and inking for each poses its own problem and both have advantages and disadvantages of its own. It should be noted that on his sketches Steve never uses a blue pencil. As many artists prefer penciling to inking or vice-versa, Steve would rather ink his own pencils than have someone else do it. In a rare interview, Steve once disclosed that he did not enjoy working on the little fantasy stories he did for Marvel and was glad when the fillers were discontinued. We can only speculate, but perhaps Steve's dislike for this type of work led to his creation of Spiderman in Amazing Adult Fantasy, a mag that consisted entirely of such fillers.

Steve was born in 1927 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Over the years he became interested in doing comic art and went to New York to enter the comic book field. He enrolled in the Cartoonists and Illustrators School where his style was greatly influenced by his instructor Jerry Robinson. During the next three years, he made the rounds of the comic publishers, but was turned down. Finally, he landed his first job with Headline Publications where he worked on a comic called "Black Magic". This was during the period of the short lived 3-D era. During this time Steve worked as an inker, with others, on Harvey's 3-D books and also on Simon and Kirby's Captain 3-D. However, were sorry to say, his work on Captain 3-D never saw print. In 1953, he became a regular artist for Charlton Press, working on their Fantasy Line. His work there included "Thing" and "This Mag is Haunted". His career was interuppted in 1954 when he had to leave New York and give up comic illustration. He was away from the business for over a year and a half. Returning in the latter part of 1955 to work for Stan Lee at Marvel; his work there consisted mostly of science fiction work. Steve drifted away from Marvel in 1956 and went back to Charlton Press. For the next year, he did work only for Charlton. His work at this time included "The Mysterious Traveler" and "Dr. Haunt". The Mysterious Traveler was a character somewhat similar to L. Dead, only somehow he seemed better done. Perhaps it was because he had an air of mystery about him and was more than just another host-ghoul. At any rate, the stories were for the most part better written. One of the best, which appeared in issue #6, was entitled "When Old Doc Died" and raised the question of just what heaven really consisted of for different individuals. This issue also contained another fine story, "Mr. Evriman". Ditko's style on the Mysterious Traveler, like most all of his pre-Marvel and short story work, was extremely simplified with a good deal of blank backgrounds. Even today, one can note the difference between his "Creeper" and his short stuff for Charlton. One favorite Ditko technique with MT was to draw very small panels and fill the space between them up with a gigantic head of the Mysterious Traveler. It was in 1958 that Stan Lee asked him to work for Marvel again. He returned to Marvel, but still did some work for Charlton. Steve did Captain Atom in 1959, but it just didn't catch on at that time. He also did work for Dell (circa 1961-63) on their strip "Conga" and "Gorgo". In 1962, Steve began drawing his greatest accomplishment, to date-Spiderman. He went through 38 issues of that magazine, the origin story, in Amazing Fantasy #15, two annuals, and worked with Jack Kirby in a team up of Spiderman and the Human Torch in Strange Tales Annual #2. Another of his more famous works appeared in Strange Tales #110. This was the first Dr. Strange story. This feature ran through two issues, then was dropped. It was reintroduced in Strange Tales #114 as a regular strip. Steve did the art work on Dr. Strange up until issue #146. His two Marvel masterpieces appeared together in one story, in Spiderman Annual #2. Dr. Strange is interesting not only because he is the first successful Black Magic Creation of the second heroic age but also because he first revealed Steve's fine talent for drawing tales of the supernatural. His epic fight with Mordo and Dormammu ranks as the greatest Black Magic serial in the history of comics (and very possibly the greatest serial). When Steve left Marvel, Bill Everett, the greatest Marvel horror artist of the forties (and in Bob Cosgrove's opinion the greatest horror comic artist), took over the strip and temporarily prevented its slip into mediocrity at the hands of less capable artists. In the meantime however, Ditko was showing his wash skills weilding the brush at Warren, where the superior reproduction and freedom from CCA restrictions, allowed him to surpass even his Strange work. In 1966, it was back to Charlton, for work on a renewed Captain Atom. Steve really put new life into this character and in 1967, even gave him a new uniform. 1966 saw Steve create another great hero for Charlton. In issue #83 of Captain Atom, the new Blue Beetle was born; in a seven page short feature at the back of the book. It was only a short time later that the Blue Beetle was awarded his own book. The new Blue Beetle book also brought about another Ditko creation - The Question. This hero had great possibilities. It is a



shame Charlton dropped its hero line, before the fullest potential of this character was realized. Even though Charlton's hero line has been dropped, Steve's science fiction work still appears in many of their remaining books.

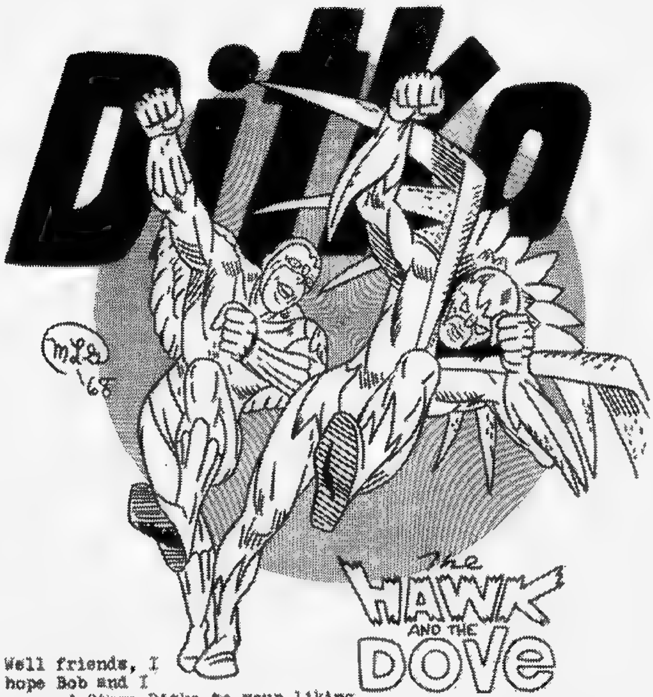
With Wally Wood's publication of Witzend, Steve created Mr. A, an originless character, with a "Big Man" type mask and a Question outfit. Garbbed entirely in white, Mr. A is almost exactly like the Question, and works under the gimmick that there are no greys in the world, but only black and white, good and evil. Steve's Question stories are probably typical of the kind of work he most enjoys--mobster stories. His work with the Enforcers and the Crime-master represent some of his best work at Marvel; and this is what he has chosen to work on with the new Creeper character at National, so we are fairly safe in operating on this assumption. Mr. A, for those of you who have not seen him in Witzend, is in reality Rex Graine, a reporter for The Daily Crusader. He dons a mask of metal and flexible metal hands to mete out his own brand of justice. Like the Question, he has a calling card. A card half black and half white. Representing good and evil.



Mr. A

Beware the Creeper. In 1968, National Publications (D.C.) hired Steve to create a new line of super heroes. The first in this line was the Creeper, appearing in Showcase #73. D.C. realized they had a good thing going; for even before his appearance in Showcase, a tryout magazine, D.C. had the Creeper slated for his own magazine. Once again Ditko had a hit. The Creeper is a new and different kind of super hero, with great potential. The idea of a super hero changing identities by means of an activator is certainly an innovation in comics.

Speaking of innovations, Steve's next contribution, to the comic media, is certainly that and more. The Hawk and the Dove is as topical as today's news. The story of two brothers; one aggressive and impatient (The Hawk) and the other restrained and passive (The Dove) is dramatically presented by superb Ditko artwork. The scenes where they are given their powers, by a mysterious, disembodied voice, and where they first burst into action, is typical of the Ditko flair for dramatic drawing. This strip will certainly bear watching, in the future, for both its story and art are something unusual in comic reading.


Ditko
MLG '68
The HAWK AND THE DOVE

Well friends, I hope Bob and I covered Steve Ditko to your liking. We didn't go into his work for Tower (Thunder Agents) or his work with Trapani, on Dell's Nukla, because this was only a minor part of his career. I hope you enjoyed reading about Steve. His style is like no other artist. Even though he prefers to remain aloof from giving out information on himself; I hope this article does justice to one of the great pros in comics - STEVE DITKO, man of mystery.

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Spiderman and Dr. Strange - Marvel Comics Group '68
Blue Beetle, The Question and Capt. Atom - Charlton Comics
The Creeper and The Hawk and The Dove - National Per. '68

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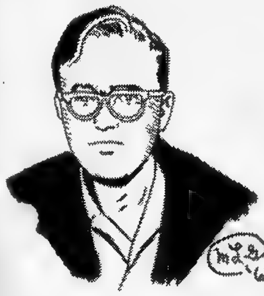
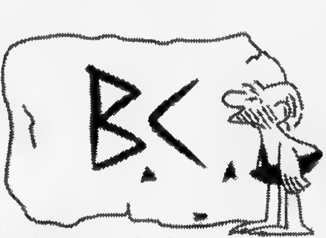




by Martin L. Greim

B.C. or, as he is better known, Bob Cosgrove; is the editor of Champion, this zines companion fanzine, and a good friend of mine. Bob is a knowlegable young man, in the world of comics and makes a good subject for this issues comic fan section. I posed the following questions to Bob, so you fellow fans could get to know him. Oh, by the way, the drawing in the upper left hand corner of this article is Bob, not the little guy on the right. Although there is a kind of a resemblence.

M.G. When did you first become interested in comics and fandom?

B.C. My interest in comics began at an early age--three to be exact, when my father brought them home from work for me. Fandom came much later, when my father made the mistake of telling me about Stan's Mag. Ex. and I made the mistake of going there. Stan showed me some zines--I bought a few Capt. Marvels--wrote Roy Thomas and Glen Johnson and BAK--I was hooked!

M.G. How about some background, Bob?

B.C. Currently, I'm sixteen and a junior at Braintree High School, where I'm on the debating team varsity with a 5-2 record, a yearbook editor, and art flunky. In other words, I get drafted for stage decorations and the like. Right now I'm working as co-chairman of the junior prom. My interests in art began at an early age (now where have I heard THAT before) --three to be exact, when an artistically inclined cousin gave me a push in the right direction. From there I started copying pictures out of comics. From this was born my ambition to draw comics magazines (also due to stubborness, since I'm a better writer than artist.) Other hobbies--well in between fandom, I sometimes eat and sleep, and I do play the accordian.

M.G. How and when did you create the ama-hero Space Guardian?

B.C. Actually, I thought up SG several years ago for an appearance in a zine of my own which I gave up. Originally, Rich Buckler had agreed to illustrate him, so that is why he wound up in Buckler's INTRIGUE. The character is mostly my own, and the helmet without the eyes was my original idea, although unfortunatly Mike Dorsey didn't draw him that way. Then you came along, Martin and--well, you know the rest. SG was inspired by two stories, one a SF comic one-shot by Atlas called The Scanners, about trench-coat guys with sunglasses who could spot Martians, and the other an S&K story called Sammy's Wonderful Glass, which appeared in the old Black Magic.

M.G. What comic artist has inspired you the most and what is your favorite comic?

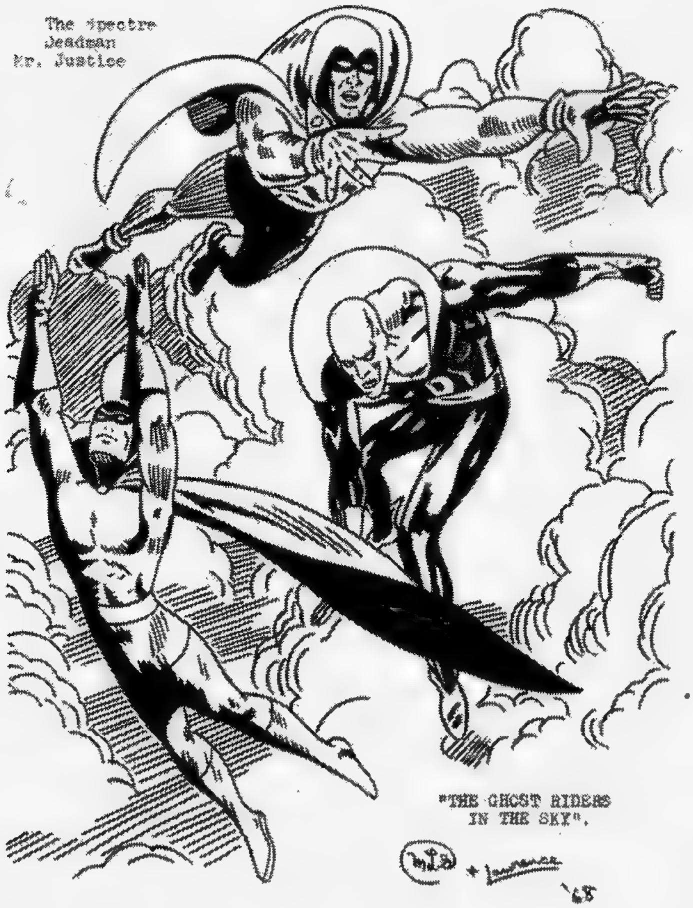
B.C. Well, you know that I think very highly of Kirby's work, and that I always strive for the type of action he puts into his strip. I also admire his way with hands, and you'll note my faces are sort of Kirbyesque. However, in my younger years, I used to swipe from Infantino for practice. I don't try to copy Kirby, because copyists, vis., Stone, look lousy compared to Jack. I'd personally prefer to smooth out my style--you know, Williamson or Wood--and although I strive for an original style, I learn things from everyone. You won't believe this, but I looked thru 5 million comics before I finally learned how to draw walls by studying Infantino. As for my favorite comic, I'd have to say THOR, because of the imaginative story and art. FF, Deadman and SHIELD come close though, as did some of Giordano's stuff at Charlton.

M.G. What would you like to do in the future?

B.C. In Champion, I'd like to try new techniques which will begin to show with the Kirby Special, be highlighted even more in issue four, and so on. One things for sure, future CHAMPIONS are going to try some ideas that fandom hasn't thought of, as you yourself know, having seen some of them.

M.G. What's your favorite newspaper comic strip?

B.C. B.C., what else? The strip may not be any good, but the initials are great! Actually, for humor, I prefer Hart's Wizard of Id to his B.C., and for serious work, nobody can match the beautiful illustration of Len Starr's ON STAGE. The OS stories are well done also.


The Spectre
Deadman
Mr. Justice

"THE GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY".

mls + Lawrence '68

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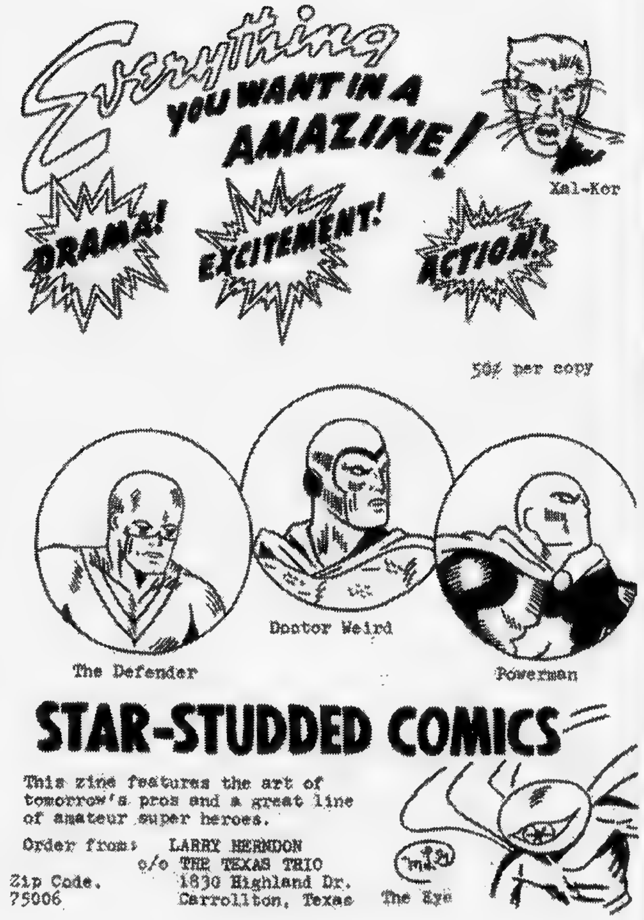
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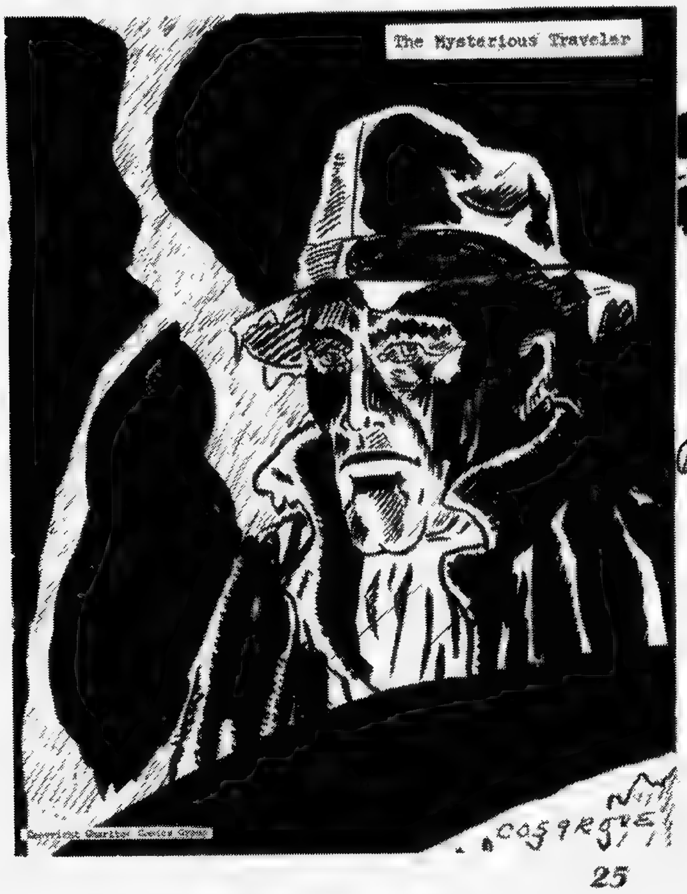
When Bob Cosgrove found that Steve Ditko was to be the pro, featured in this issue; he created this drawing of the Mysterious Stranger, emulating the Ditko style.


The Mysterious Traveler
COSGROVE

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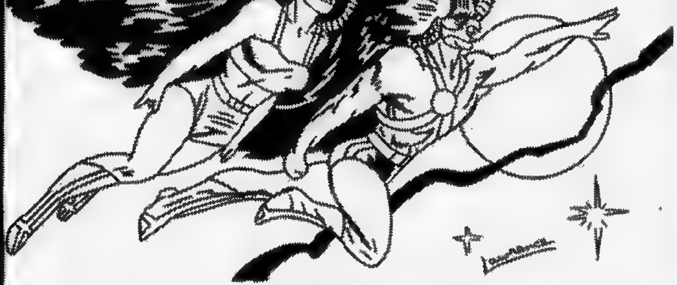
SHORTHAND...

by
John Lawrence



"How Hawkgirl Won Her Wings"

It was in Flash Comics #24 (Dec. 1941) that the original Hawkgirl received her wings. Carter Hall and his confidante, Shiera Sanders, were going to a costume ball and Shiera was at a loss as what to wear. Carter (Hawkman) Hall solved the problem by giving her a costume like his and a pair of wings that worked. After the ball, Shiera was mistaken for Hawkman and became involved against a blackmail gang, led by Bark Bennett. Bennett was blackmailing a young couple and when Shiera interfered, she was captured. The criminals then believed Hawkman to be a girl; until the real Hawkman showed up and brought the gang to justice. Hawkman was angry with Shiera and wanted to take back his spare costume. He never did however, and Shiera became his partner from that time on.

Finis

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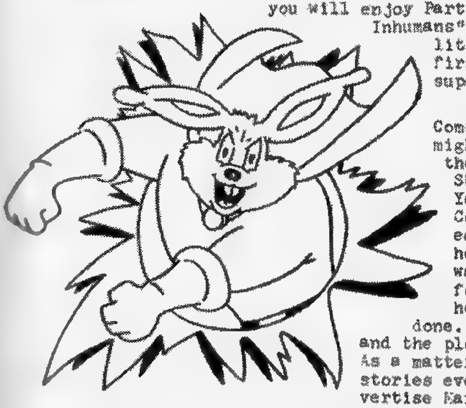
THE FIRST INHUMANS

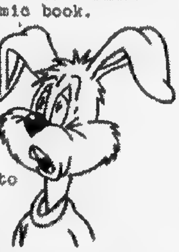
Part 2

Written and Drawn
by
Martin L. Greim

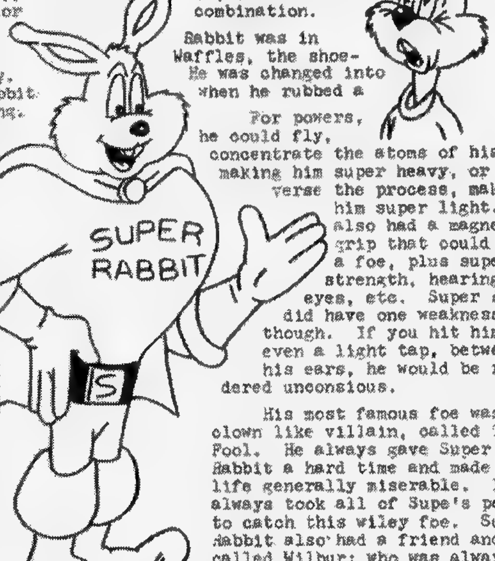
Welcome again into the world of lighter super hero reading. I hope you will enjoy Part 2 of "The First Inhumans", as it tells a little more about the first cousins to the super heroes of today.



Mighty Marvel Comics presents the mighty, the invincible, the fantastic....... SUPER RABBIT? Yes friends, Marvel Comics once published an animal super hero. Super Rabbit was his name and for a super animal he was quite well done. The art was good and the plots quite funny. As a matter of fact, his stories even managed to advertise Marvel's human super heroes. In one instance, a splash panel shows Super Rabbit waiting in a train terminal reading, of all things, a Captain America comic book. Marvel wit was around, even in the forties.



Super Rabbit's costume was good too. It was blue, with orange gloves and boots, and a red cape. This costume always appealed to me, because of this color combination.

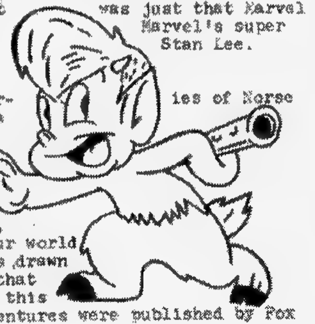


Super Rabbit was in reality Waffles, the shoe-shine boy. He was changed into Super Rabbit when he rubbed a magic ring.

For powers, he could fly, concentrate the atoms of his body, making him super heavy, or reverse the process, making him super light. He also had a magnetic-grip that could stun a foe, plus super strength, hearing, eyes, etc. Super Rabbit did have one weakness though. If you hit him, even a light tap, between his ears, he would be rendered unconsious.

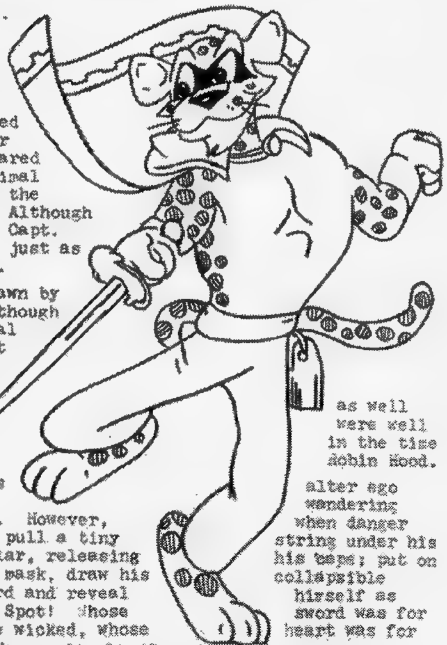
His most famous foe was a clown like villain, called The Fool. He always gave Super Rabbit a hard time and made his life generally miserable. It always took all of Supe's powers to catch this wiley foe. Super Rabbit also had a friend and side called Wilbur; who was always geting him into trouble.

Ever though Super Rabbit was a comic character, his stories had just enough adventure so you'd be in there rooting for him. Maybe it was just that Marvel touch. So you see, not all of Marvel's super heroes were human. Take note Stan Lee.



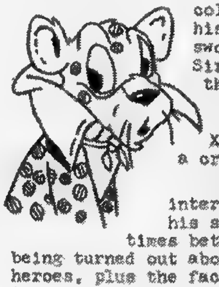
LI'L PAN

Long before Stan Lee's stories of Norse and Greek mythology, there was a regularly published strip about a son of a Greek God. His name was Li'l Pan. Pan possessed a magic horn that could make anything appear. He was half human and half goat, and often ventured forth into our world seeking adventure. Li'l Pan was drawn by Pat Adams. The same artist that drew Cosmo Cat. (See Part 1 of this series for Cosmo Cat.) His adventures were published by Fox Publications. The same people that published Blue Beetle.



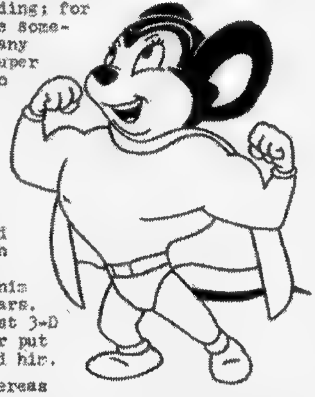
SIR SPOT, the lion hearted leopard. Capt. Marvel Bunny wasn't the only super animal put out by Fawcett Pub. There was also the sword wielding, masked avenger, known as Sir Spot. Sir Spot appeared in a comic called Animal Fair and was perhaps the best feature in it. Although not as well known as Capt. Marvel Bunny, he was just as exciting a character.

Sir Spot was drawn by William Brady, who, though only drawing an animal character, really put a lot of detail into his work. His background scenery, as well as the costumes were well done, and set in the time period of Robin Hood.



Sir Spot's alter ego was a meek and mild, wandering poet, named Freckles. However, when danger threatened, he would pull a tiny string under his collar, releasing his cape; put on his mask, draw his collapsible sword and reveal himself as Sir Spot! Whose sword was for the wicked, whose heart was for the good! Sir Spot had a trade mark something like Zorro. He would carve an X in a circle on his foes head, branding him a criminal.

Sir Spot made quite interesting reading; for his stories were sometimes better than many being turned out about human super heroes, plus the fact his Zorro type stories gave him a certain kind of mystique.



Here he comes to save the day! Mighty Mouse is on his way! Perhaps the best known of the super animals. Mighty Mouse's adventures have appeared in comics, on T.V. and even in the movies. He is such a popular character that toys, games and pictures concerning him have been on the market for years. In fact the first 3-D comic book ever put out, featured him.

Whereas Mighty Mouse is such a well known character, not much could be said here that isn't repetitious. However, I wonder how many of you actually know his origion. No one knows exactly who gave birth to Mighty Mouse. The first record of his existance came one stormy night, in a deep forest; when a cloaked figure left a basket on an elderly mouse couples front door. The mouse couple took the baby in and soon found he had tremendous powers. He could fly and was capable of tremendous feats of strength. When he grew older, he left the old couple and his forest home, to go forth and help mankind as Mighty Mouse.

Mighty Mouse was drawn, in his early days, by Connie Rasinski or Art Bartsch. Although I don't know who draws him now, they were the best at showing expression on their characters faces.

(continued next page)

Mighty Mouse had three regular foes. The Claw, a cat gangland leader and his sometimes aid, The Professor. Stories in which they were featured were always exciting. On a more humorous vein, there was Oil Can Harry. Stories in which he was featured, were more along the lines of the silent movie days; when the girl was always being menaced by a mustached villain. Mighty Mouse was always saving a girl named Pearl from Oil Can's clutches.

Mighty Mouse appeared in Terrytoons Comics and in his own. He has been around the longest of all the super animals and is still a hit today.

Well I'm just about out of space, as well as material for this issue. Next issue will conclude this series, by discussing some of the more recent super animals and one super being who was in between super animal and super human.

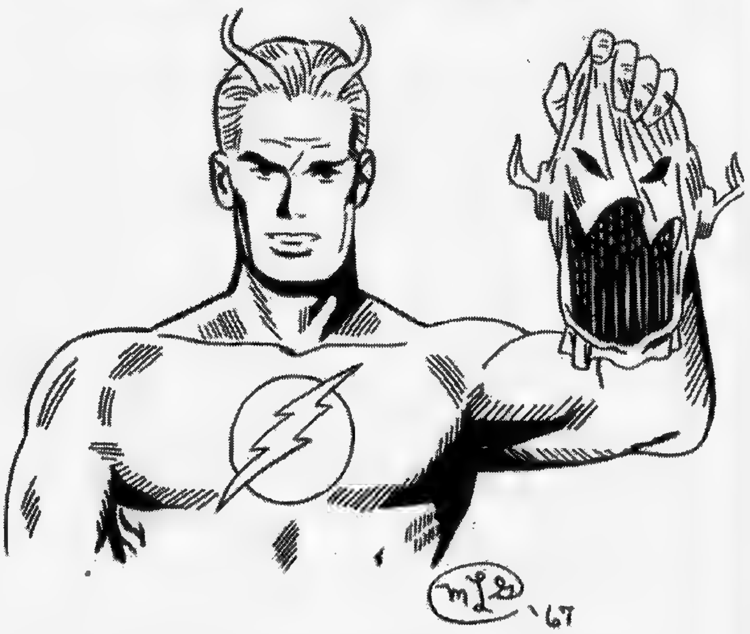
NEXT ISSUE: THE "MIGHTY ATOM"

(or: so you thought D.C. had the only Atom, huh?)

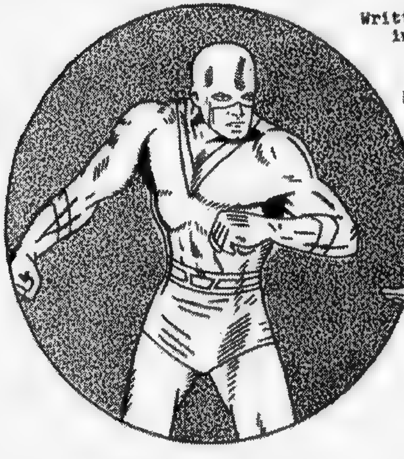
*Note - I would like to thank Bob Cosgrove, editor of "Champion", for permission to use the cartoon in this issues Comic Corner. It was originally intended for issue #2 of his zine, until he ran out of space. - ed.

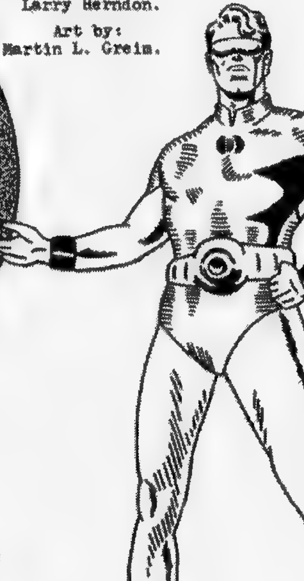
Thanks Bob

The COMIC CORNER


mLG '67

THE OTHER DEFENDER




mLG '68

Written by: Martin L. Greim
in conjunction with,
Larry Herndon.

Art by:
Martin L. Greim.

I have often stated that I am new to active fandom. Therefore, when I created this zine's ama-strip, The Defender, I was unaware that another Defender existed. When I found out, I changed the title of my strip to "David Manning - The Defender". As my character's origin and powers are entirely different than those of his predissor, I believe there is room for two Defendor's in fandom.

After finding out, there was another Defender, I decided to do some checking on him. Through Bob Cosgrove, I borrowed some zines he'd appeared in and found he was a darn good character; so good, in fact, I decided to give credit where credit was due and do an article on him. I wrote his creator Larry Herndon, and he graciously supplied me with his Defender's history.

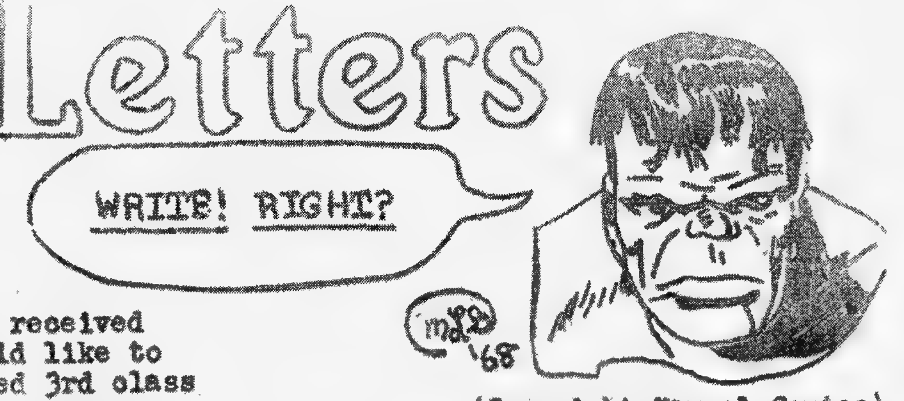
The Defender was created in April of 1963 by yours truly, Larry Herndon, to be one of the main heroes in STAR-STUDDED COMICS, along with Changling (Buddy Saunders created him) and Dr. Weird (created by Howard Keltner). His origin appeared in S.S.C. #1 (dated Sept. 1963), and related how District Attorney, Carl Reed, unable to get justice due to legal restraints in the courtroom, disguised himself to seek out criminals "outside the bounds of the law." Before he could undertake his first case, however, he was suddenly transported to an alien world of the 11th Dimension. Here he was endowed with various powers (flying, super-strength, ability to exist in any environment, and invulnerability to all but the most destructive of weapons) and he used them to overthrow that world's evil dictator. When he returned to earth, he retained his powers, and used them to complete his first case (getting evidence on a trigger-happy gangster). Art credits for this story go to Richard "Grass" Green.

In issue #4, The Defender was back again, being one of the original members of THE LIBERTY LEGION. This group thwarted an attack on the U.S. by a madman bent on world conquest. This was a book-length strip with art by fandom's top 5 artists. Story credit goes to Buddy S. and myself. The Defender popped up once more in S.S.C. #7, where he encountered Crystal Stone, a beautiful con-artist who had super-hypnotic powers. During the course of the story, she learned his secret identity, and still keeps that secret. Art for this story was by Dick Tatge and Al Kuhfeld. Al also did the script. Issue 8 saw the Defender teamed with another hero, POWERMAN, as they fought the menace of Zygot the Terrible, a foe who had the power of mind-control. The script and pencils were credited to J. Starr, inking by Buddy Saunders. S.S.C. #10 The Defender vs. The Widow Worshipers, a cult who worshiped spiders. Script by myself and art by J. Starr and Al Milgrom. The Defender is due to appear in S.S.C.#13 in a strip called "The House Where Terror Lived" and soon in a 20 page 2-part story vs. The Black Monster

I want to thank Larry for his fine interview and opening a new world for me, as far as ama-heroes go. Star Studded Comics is a fine zine and a show place for the future pros of comicdom. I can't recomend this publication highly enough. However, don't forget ol' David Manning - The Defender, here in the pages of "The Comic Crusader".

*(The Defender is copyrighted 1967 by Larry Herndon)

COMIC CHATTER Letters



(Copyright Marvel Comics)

First, for those of you who received issue #1 first class, I would like to explain why it's being mailed 3rd class this time. I was so late in getting issue #1 in the mail, I felt obligated to mail it 1st class. (Taking a loss on my first issue.) From now on, this zine will be mailed 3rd class. Now let's take a look at some words of wisdom about issue #1.

Bruce Anderson - In issue #1, I most enjoyed your article on the 'inhumans'. I had thought all aspects of the Golden Age costumed heroes had been covered, but apparently you've hit on one that has not. Of those mentioned, I remember only Supermouse, who I still remember as "Supercheese"; most of the others were, I think, a bit before my time.
(I THOUGHT MANY OF YOU MIGHT ENJOY THE INHUMANS ARTICLE. IT PRESENTS A PART OF THE COMIC WORLD NOT TOO MUCH IS KNOWN ABOUT. SOME OF THOSE SUPER-ANIMALS ARE IN THE 1940 ERA AND ARE ALMOST AS HARD TO FIND AS THE ONES FEATURING THEIR HUMAN COUNTERPARTS.)

(Copyright National Per. pub.)

Richard Gramlich - Your first issue was very good with a few exceptions. Your strip is one of the best I've seen except it was too short and had no real story. Secondly, you need more articles like your interview with Jim Steranko and less capsules of Golden Age comics. Your fanzine was overall very short and you should get articles from other people for your zine instead of making it almost an entirely one-man job. It will make it larger and a little less one-sided.
(FIRST OF ALL "THE DEFENDER" IS A CONTINUING STRIP AND SHOULD BE FOLLOWED TO GET THE COMPLETE STORY. SECONDLY, I FIND MOST OF FANDOM IS INTERESTED IN GOLDEN AGE MATERIAL AND LIKE ARTICLES THAT INCREASE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THIS ERA. THE REASON THIS ZINE IS SHORT, IS A FACT OF LIFE. 1. IT COSTS MONEY TO PRINT. 2. I WOULD LIKE TO FEATURE ARTICLES BY OTHER PEOPLE. I'M JUST WAITING FOR WELL WRITTEN ARTICLES TO BE SENT ME. - HOW DO YOU LIKE THE ONE ON "THE OTHER DEFENDER", BY L. HERNDON?)

Hey gang! For those of you who wish to contribute articles you don't have to include artwork with it. If the article is well written, I'll even do the art. Of course I'm always in the market for good artwork too. -ed.

Fannish Debate

Rob Gluckson (Editor of Guts, the magazine with intestinal fortitude)-
Just saw Comic Crusader #1 with the bit on the Guts lettercol. I'd like to make a few comments on your comments. First Bob Cosgrove mentioned the fact that Kirby couldn't have received the National Cartoonist Society's award because he isn't a member! First of all, this wouldn't make a difference, as all artists that qualified were eligible for the award. Secondly, Kirby *is* a member of the NCS (he probably couldn't work for the comics if he wasn't) and thirdly, he *was* nominated for the award, and *lost*. There are other rebuttals on all the points mentioned, as well as more arguments for Bob's point of view. The one thing I objected to is that Bob didn't mention that Guts had rebuttals to the letter rebutted. I know Bob didn't mean for it to sound that way, but it seemed that the opinions printed in that one letter were echoed throughout the ish. No hard feelings, though.

(Copyright)
Marvel
Comics

(Copyright N.P.)

(I TURNED YOUR LETTER OVER TO B.C., FOR I THOUGHT IT BEST TO LET HIM MAKE HIS OWN REPLY. IT IS AS FOLLOWS:) I thought I made it clear that these were only comments recieved in your lettercol, but now that you mention it, regardless of the letters you had defending DC, the entire tone of the editorial was anti-Marvel, which strikes me as rather stupid. This business of hero-worshiping one company and despising another, both of whom have their share of flaws, is unrealistic. I agree, Avengers is junk, but what about Nick Fury? Since you are concerned about correcting columns in other fanzines,why did you not inform letter-writer Mark Evanier that "Kirby was nominated...and lost." when he stated that Kirby was never nominated? You haven't convinced me that Kirby is a member. I didn't see his name in the NCS directory, nor can I agree with you in light of this statement in OTDB #60, May, 1967: "...however there is NO organization at this time that gives awards to all work done in the field. Even the NCS gives awards only to its members, and comic book artists like Jack Kirby and Russ Manning, WHO DO NOT BELONG, would never receive awards. Let me assure you, comic book artists are not unionized. The NCS is not a union, and many comic mag artists do not belong. No hard feelings here, either, Rob. Nothing like a good fannish debate.

(Copyright: National Per.)

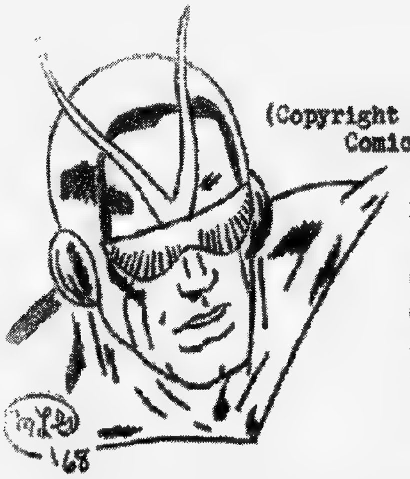
(Copyright DC)

Mike Callahan- Why did I buy C.C. #1? It had an article on Green Lantern, and anything featuring GL, I buy. I figured it would be my first and last copy. Fortunately, I was wrong. It was the first, yes, but definitely isn't the last. C.C. is one of the few good fanzines now available. The articles are genuinely interesting and such things as Crusader Comments and Comic Chatter I hope to see become regular features. The Defender is really great, I think you've got a winner on your hands. Coming close to the GL article was Jim Steranko. Even though I'm *strictly* a DC fan, after reading the write-up, I nearly went out and bought an issue of S.H.I.E.L.D. (MIKE, IF YOU WERE EVER GOING TO BUY AN ISSUE OF S.H.I.E.L.D. NOW IS THE TIME. ISSUE #3 HAS SOME OF THE BEST ART I'VE EVER SEEN IN A COMIC MAG. IT'S REMINISCENT OF THE E.C. MAGS.

Bruce Coville- I've just finished the first issue of Comic Crusader, and wanted to tell you that it was excellent. I particularly enjoyed the zine for two reasons. First, Jim Steranko is one of my very favorite artists, and his S.H.I.E.L.D. strip is the most original thing I've ever come accross. I consider him to be the greatest innovator in the bullpen. Second, I Have many fond memories of Supermouse and his compatriots, and the article on animal heroes was at once informative and nostalgic. Thank you, I'm waiting anxiously for the next installment on it.
(WHEN I FIRST DECIDED TO WRITE AN ARTICLE ON SUPER ANIMALS, IT WAS JUST TO GIVE FANDOM A LITTLE INFORMATION ON THIS FIELD. I NEVER DREAMED IT WOULD GO OVER SO WELL. FOR THE MOST PART IT WAS ENJOYED BY ALL. HOPE YOU LIKE THE SECOND INSTALLMENT.

Mike Friedrich- Re: Comic Chatter C.C. #1...it may interest you to know, concerning "Bull's Eye Bill" that when Bill Everett stayed over at my NYC apt. last summer during the Academy Con, he told me his middle name is Blake ('twas his mother's maiden name or something) and that other than the Sub-Mariner he likes drawing westerns, since part of his boyhood was spent on a ranch, I think in Arizona. Bill is one of the really fine people in the business and I'm so glad I was able to talk with him. My roommate and I talked with him for hours one night about his early creer and it was fascinating. It still excites my fannish heart to think about it!
(YOU LUCKY DOG! WHAT I WOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN FOR A CHANCE LIKE THAT. MR. EVERETT HAS BEEN ONE OF MY FAVORITE ARTISTS SINCE THE 40'S, AND,CURSE MY LUCK, I MISSED HIM AT THE CON. MY GREAT AMBITION IN LIFE IS TO GET AN ORIGINAL SUB-MARINER DRAWING BY BILL EVERETT. MY HAT'S OFF TO YOU, MIKE.

Craig Dorsey- there is one character I would like to see profiled in your next "History's Heroes" column, and that is Shock Gibson, who appeared in Speed Comics. I would also like to compliment you on your first issue. The best articles were the ones on Green Lantern and The Falcon. I'm glad you started your pro articles on Jim Steranko. I think Jim Steranko has a very unique style and his art and stories are about the best thing coming out of Marvel lately. The first episode of the Defender was well written and drawn, but should have been longer. All in all, The Comic Crusader was very good, I am also waiting for your next issue.



(Copyright Marvel Comics '68)

Doug Fratz (Editor of Comicology) One thing, certainly is different! I like the layout, so try to keep it about like that. With the reduction in printing, the art really looks great! The interview with Steranko was very interesting, naturally, even though a we bit short. All the picto-artcles were great! As I said, they give the the zine a style of its own!
(THANKS FOR THE GOOD WORDS, DOUG. HOPE YOU LIKE ISSUE #2. THE REASON ARTICLES ARE SHORT IS THAT I LIKE TO KEEP THEM TO THE POINT. HENCE THE TITLE READER'S DIGEST OF FANDOM)

Jon Jensen- I received Comic Crusader #1 today and to say the least it came as quite a surprise. The cover was not one of your best, but the logo was good. (BY THE WAY, FANS, JON HAS BEEN SAYING THAT ABOUT MY COVERS SINCE THE FIRST ONE I DID FOR CHAMPION #1. HOPE YOU LIKE THIS ISSUES'S COVER, JON.) The next page gave me a pretty good idea of what your plans are for CC in the future, along with how you got started in fandom...very interesting. I also like B.C.'s *SHORT* piece at the bottom of the page. The Jim Steranko article - yeah, that's what I like. it was well conducted, with qustions of inteest to all. The "First Inhumans"..."Funny animals; bah!" was my first thought. Well written, but I don't think this will appeal to the majority of Fandom, but who can tell? (YOU'RE THE FIRST DISSENTER, JON.)

BIG NEWS

As many of you know, the Comic Academy is being re-formed by Mark Hanerfeld. With Mark in charge, he is setting up nine regional divisions, with a regional secretary for each one.I am proud to announce that Bob Cosgrove and I have been appointed regional secrettaries for the New England district. The new Academy is still in the planning stage, but watch Comic Crusader and Champion for further developements. I also suggest you subscribe to On The Drawing Board, for firsthand info on the new Academy plus news of the comic world. Send $1.00 for a year's subscription to: Mark Hanerfeld 42-42 Colden Street, Flushing, NY 11355.

Next issue we'll have a special feature. In addition to the Con report we'll have The Defender Vs. Spsce Guardian (Champion's resident superhero.

COMIC CRUSADER WILL BE OUT IN SEPT. OR OCT. WATCH FOR THE AD IN R.B.C.C.

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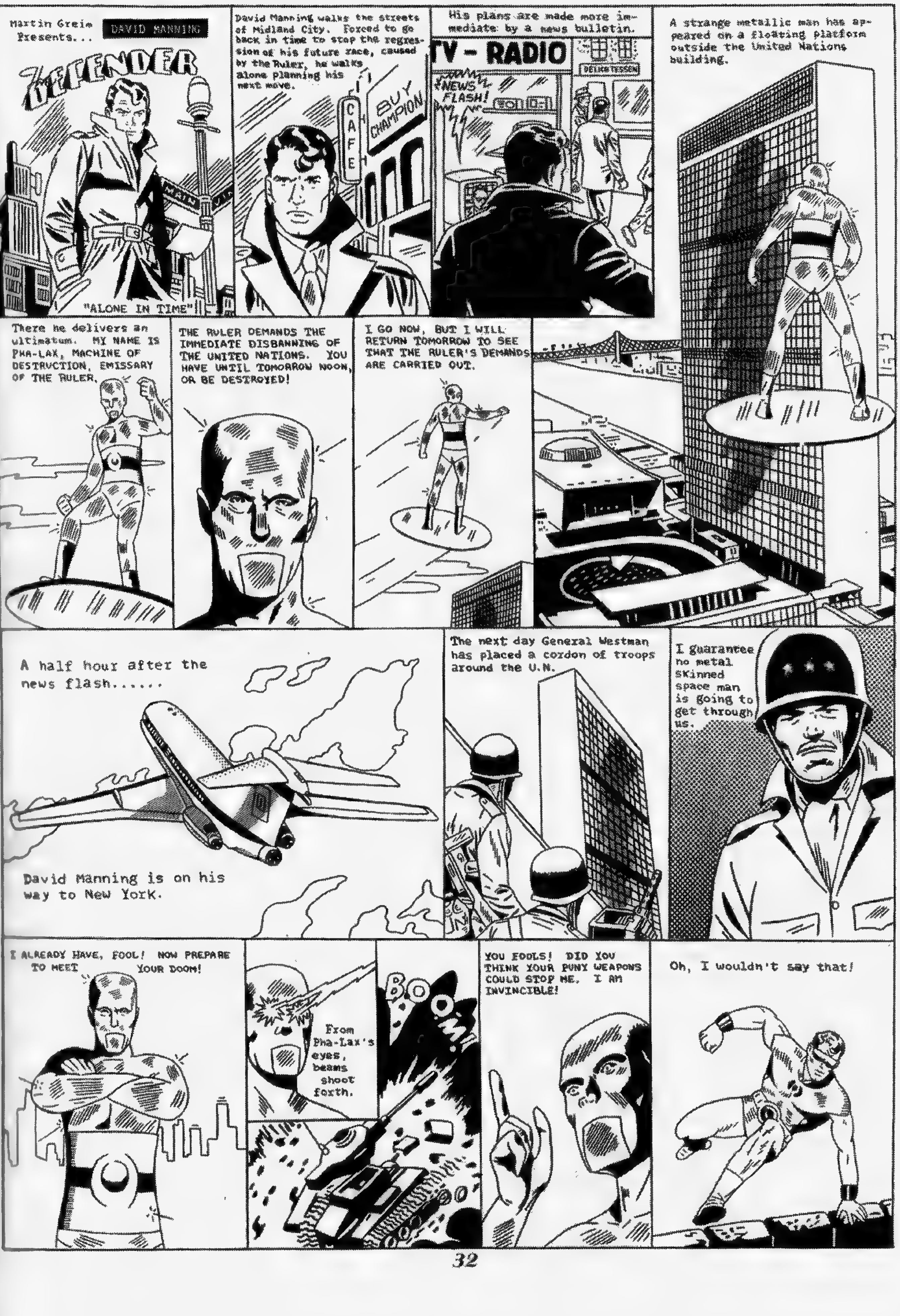
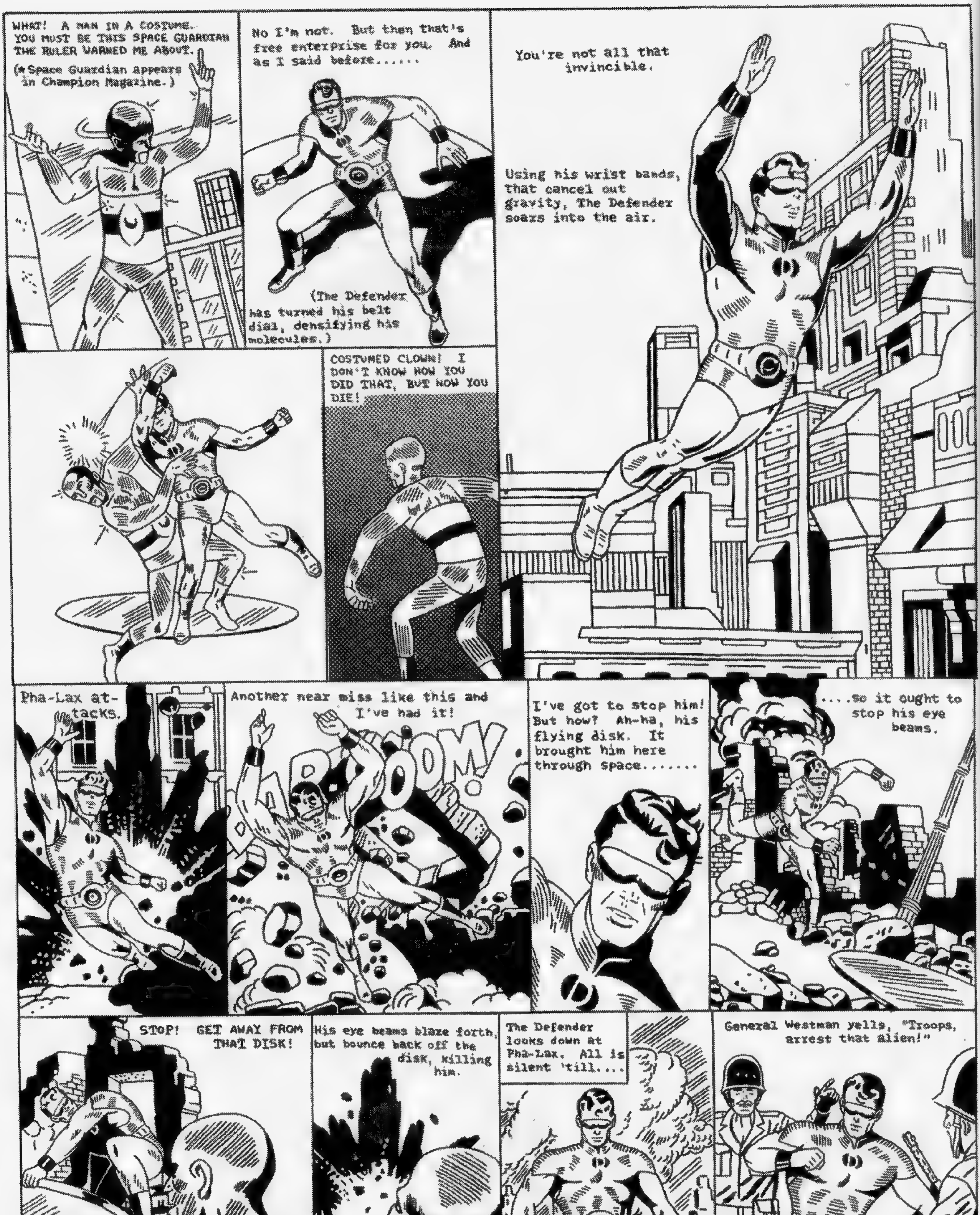

Martin Greim Presents...
DAVID MANNING
The DEFENDER
"ALONE IN TIME"
David Manning walks the streets of Midland City. Forced to go back in time to stop the regression of his future race, caused by the Ruler, he walks alone planning his next move.
CAFE
BUY CHAMPION
His plans are made more immediate by a news bulletin.
TV - RADIO
NEWS FLASH!
DELICATESSEN
A strange metallic man has appeared on a floating platform outside the United Nations building.
There he delivers an ultimatum. MY NAME IS PHA-LAX, MACHINE OF DESTRUCTION, EMISSARY OF THE RULER.
THE RULER DEMANDS THE IMMEDIATE DISBANNING OF THE UNITED NATIONS. YOU HAVE UNTIL TOMORROW NOON, OR BE DESTROYED!
I GO NOW, BUT I WILL RETURN TOMORROW TO SEE THAT THE RULER'S DEMANDS ARE CARRIED OUT.
A half hour after the news flash......
David Manning is on his way to New York.
The next day General Westman has placed a cordon of troops around the U.N.
I guarantee no metal skinned space man is going to get through us.
I ALREADY HAVE, FOOL! NOW PREPARE TO MEET YOUR DOOM!
From Pha-Lax's eyes, beams shoot forth.
BOOM!
YOU FOOLS! DID YOU THINK YOUR PUNY WEAPONS COULD STOP ME. I AM INVINCIBLE!
Oh, I wouldn't say that!


WHAT! A MAN IN A COSTUME. YOU MUST BE THIS SPACE GUARDIAN THE RULER WARNED ME ABOUT.
(*Space Guardian appears in Champion Magazine.)
No I'm not. But then that's free enterprise for you. And as I said before......
(The Defender has turned his belt dial, densifying his molecules.)
You're not all that invincible.
Using his wrist bands, that cancel out gravity, The Defender soars into the air.
COSTUMED CLOWN! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID THAT, BUT NOW YOU DIE!
Pha-Lax attacks.
Another near miss like this and I've had it!
KA-BOOM!
I've got to stop him! But how? Ah-ha, his flying disk. It brought him here through space.......
....so it ought to stop his eye beams.
STOP! GET AWAY FROM THAT DISK!
His eye beams blaze forth, but bounce back off the disk, killing him.
The Defender looks down at Pha-Lax. All is silent 'till....
General Westman yells, "Troops, arrest that alien!"
NEXT ISSUE:
SPACE GUARDIAN

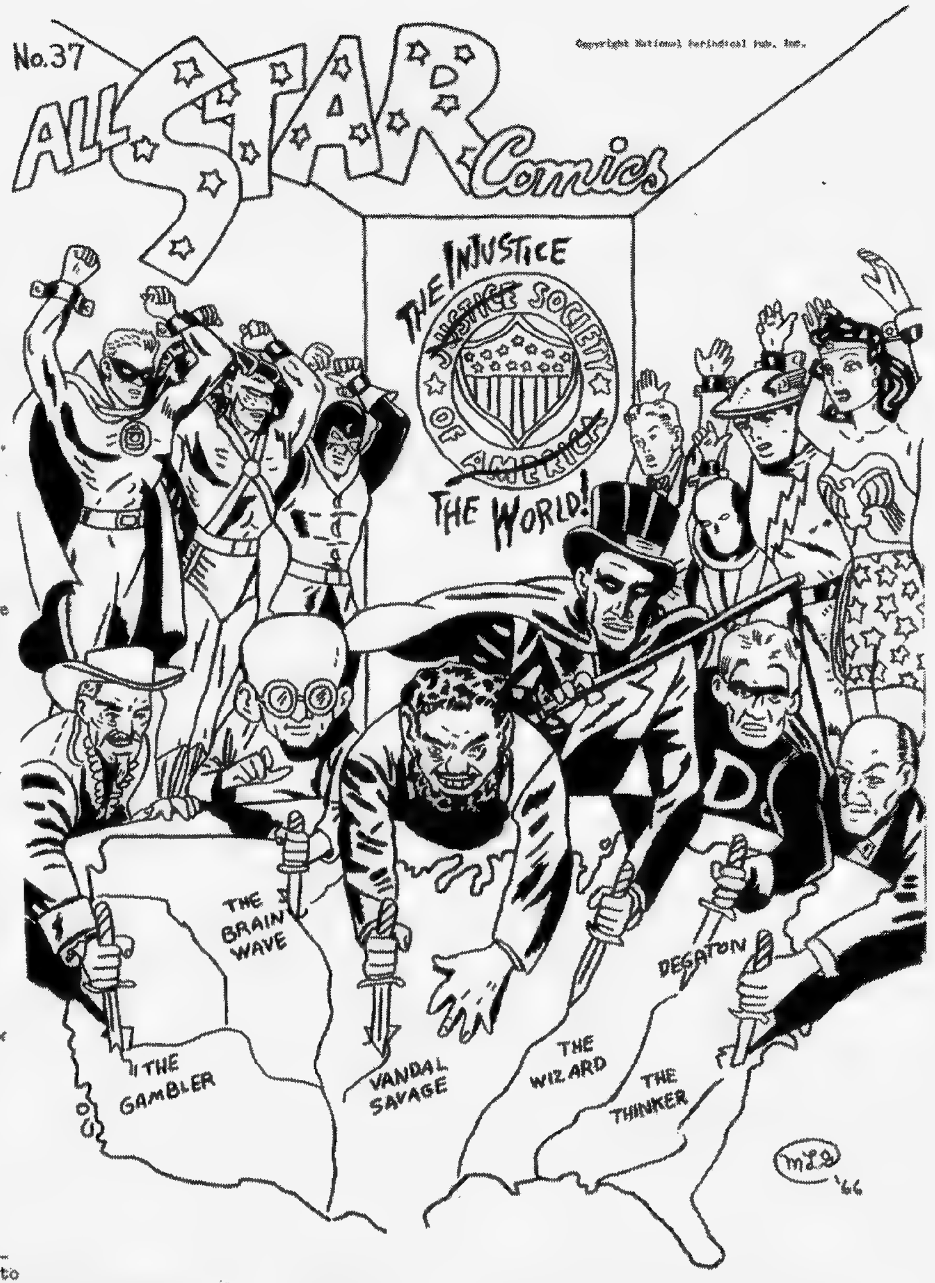
]

HISTORY'S HEROES #2

THE JUSTICE SOCIETY vs.

THE FIRST INJUSTICE SOCIETY

by
Martin L. Greim


No.37
ALL STAR Comics
Copyright National Periodical Pub. Inc.
THE INJUSTICE ~~JUSTICE~~ SOCIETY OF ~~AMERICA~~ THE WORLD!
THE BRAIN WAVE
DEGATON
THE GAMBLER
VANDAL SAVAGE
THE WIZARD
THE THINKER
MLG '66

There have been articles on this epic battle before, (Such as Glen Johnson's article in Alter Ego #9) but since I had this drawing, I did back in 1966, on hand, I decided to run through it one more time. So, for those of you who haven't read about this All Star masterpiece before, read on. For those of you who have, read on too. You never can tell, I might cover something Glen didn't.

To begin with, the drawing on the right is a facsimile of the Irwin Hasen cover of All Star #37, in which this story appeared. The story itself was written by none other than Gardner F. Fox.

It began simply enough. The Justice Society, (Consisting then of Hawkman, Flash, Green Lantern, Atom, Dr. Mid-nite, Johnny Thunder and Wonder Woman) was gathered at a radio station for a program honoring them as crime fighters. As the program began, the announcer, Carlton Swayne, suddenly began expounding on the greatness of evil and the Injustice Society of the World. He then proceeded to draw a gun and blaze away at the Justice Society. Wonder Woman quickly deflected the bullets, on her amazon bracelets, while the Atom knocked their attacker through a window. The Atom remarked afterwards, that when he had hit Swayne, it was as though he was hitting steel. The Justice Society then left for a meeting at their headquarters. At their meeting they discovered a rash of jail breaks had taken place and that an army of criminals was being created. Dr. Mid-nite had also found a note, written by the Injustice Society, declaring war on the forces of law and order. The JSA decided to split their forces; with each member covering a certain part of the country. While the Justice Society was having their meeting, so was the Injustice Society. This group was led by The Wizard, a character the JSA had met and defeated in All Star #34. He was now back for revenge; aided by The Gambler, Brain Wave, Vandal Savage, Degaton and The Thinker. This group was also splitting up; so each member could cover a certain part of the country. Now the battle lines were drawn. The Justice Society would now clash with the Injustice Society.

Hawkman was the first to come to grips with the Injustice Society. Drawn by Joe Kubert, Hawkman did battle with Vandal Savage, who was using a metal projector (an invention of the Brain Wave) to take over Gartmoor Prison. Hawkman almost stoped Savage, until the projector formed bars around him. Hawkman was captured.

The Flash, (penciled by Lee Elias) meanwhile, was fighting his old foe The Thinker. The Thinker had used a heavy ray on The Flash, but "The Fastest Man Alive" escaped when the excess weight caused him to fall through a roof, out of range. The Flash then went to see the Governor of Plateau City and found an automated dummy, in his likeness, taking his place. However, before The Flash could do anything, The Thinker captured him with some invisible wires.

Green Lantern (by Irwin Hasen) fought The Brain Wave, as he tried to steal a mineral called Uthorium, needed to power the weapons of the Injustice Society. G.L. finally caught up with The Brain Wave only to find him incased in a glass box. When Green Lantern played his power ring on it, the rays bounced back, toppling him down the side of a mountain.

Alexander Toth did the next two chapters. The first one dealing with The Atom and how he uncovered the Injustice Society's headquarters, by following the pull of an automaton's control box he had come by when he destroyed an automaton of General Klemper. (He had been visiting the General to map plans to stop the Injustice Society) The Atom did battle with all six of the Injustice Society, but was captured when the Gambler pinned him to the wall with some knives.

Again drawn by Toth, Dr. Mid-nite battled Degaton, who was using a smoke screen device to blacken Capitol City, so his army of second-story men could take over. The good doctor managed to destroy the machine and rout the second-story men, but he was felled from behind by Degaton.

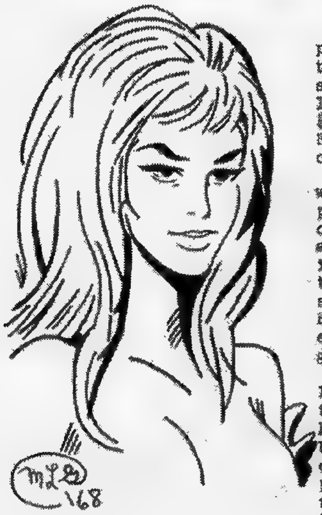
When Dr. Mid-nite revived, he found himself chained to a huge iron ball, with 5 of his Justice Society comrades. Wonder Woman and Johnny Thunder had gone to Capitol City, to help in the great crisis, but Degaton had captured them with a will-paralyzer ray. The same ray was being used to stop them from escaping. Dr. Mid-nite, who hadn't been under the ray too long, formulated a plan of escape. All six JSA members tossed the iron ball, they were chained to, upward. The ball smashed the ray and Wonder Woman soon freed her fellow members. The JSA then raced along a long corridor, until they came to a door. Opening it, the "All Stars" entered a trap. On the other side, they were covered by a disintegrator ray. Held at bay, they were to be tried by a criminal court, presided over by the Injustice Society. While the Gambler controlled the disintergrator, Judge Thinker asked the Wizard to present his case, against the Justice Society, to the jury of Injustice Society members. The jury, of course, gave a verdict of guilty. Suddenly, The Thinker spoke up, pronouncing the defendants innocent. His judges robes were droped and a mask removed, revealing Green Lantern. It seems G.L.'s ring had saved him at the last moment. He then caught up with The Thinker, put him in jail and replaced him at the trial. (The readers were given a clue to all this; for 4 panels before Green Lantern revealed himself, The Thinker was shown wearing G.L.'s ring.) Green Lantern destroyed the disintegrator, while Wonder Woman captured the Injustice Society jury. Meanwhile, The Wizard had fled. When the "All Stars" went after him, they ran into his criminal army. The JSA made short work out of them. The Flash was about to go after the Wizard when he saw the wizard running towards him. The Wizard was being pursued and seconds later captured, by a group of boys. These boys were The Junior Justice Society of America; young fans of the JSA, who had organized themselves into a club. So ended the JSA's first battle against the Injustice Society.

COMIC CHATTER

NEWS and REVIEWS
by
Martin L. Greim

This section, of Comic Chatter, is devoted to the discussing of various happenings in the comic world. For this edition, I would like to review two magazines, of the comic media, that I have found extremely interesting.

Barbarella



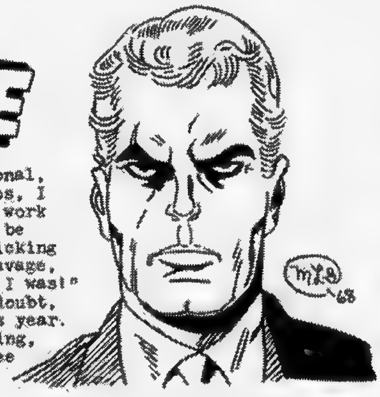
For those of you who are comic purists, I recomend the English translated version, of the French strip, Barbarella, emphatically. It is put out by Grove Press, for $1.50 and has a picture of Jane Fonda (from the Barbarella movie) on the cover.

The Barbarella comic strip was originally intended as a game; privately done for the amusement of the author, Jean-Claude Forest, and some of his friends. However, it was immediately successful with the French public and later in several other European countries. Even in the United States, Barbarella has a loyal and dedicated group of fans.

The strip, first appeared in 1962, and deals with a girl space traveller, in the year 40,000 A.D. Barbarella, with her long hair, baby face and disdain for needless clothes, finds herself on the planet Lythion; where she is confronted by monsters and robots of the strange planet. She is put to one test after another, but vanquishes evil in whatever form she finds it, and rewards, in her particular fashion, all the handsome men she meets during her adventures. And, whether battling sadists or turning her ray gun on monsters, she cannot seem to avoid losing all or part of her skin-tight space suit. This book is definately not for younger comic readers, but more particularly for the older ones, who enjoy the two basic art forms; the comic strip and the female nude.

His name is...

SAVAGE



When Gil Kane left National, to try a new concept in comics, I was saddened. I thought his work on Green Lantern could never be surpassed. However, after picking up issue #1 of His Name is Savage, all I can say is, "How wrong I was!" This magazine is, without a doubt, the best thing I've read this year.

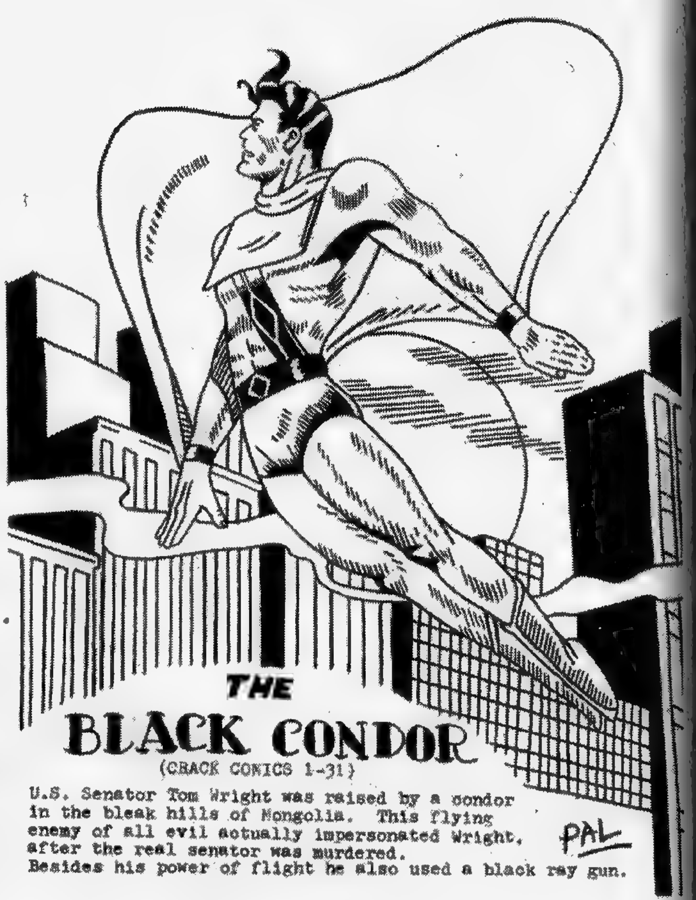
On the cover is a painting, of Savage, that looks like Lee Marvin, but inside, the Gil Kane version, does not. Inside he looks like a fearless, almost sinister man of action. In this first issue, action is aboudant. Savage reaches the pinacle of action, with scenes that could never be printed in a comic book.

Savage, it is told, is a man without plans, hopes, or dreams...A man living against the day he falls victim to his own business...The business of murder. Savage uses the resources of The Committe (the higest priority intelligence group. Not listed on any government record or included in any budget and is responsible only to the President of the United States.) to hunt and eliminate the enemies of the United States that cannot be destroyed by other secret service agencies. I cannot recommend this publication highly enough. It is a milestone in comic publications. If you haven't been able to find it at your local magazine store, you can subscribe by sending $2.10, for 6 issues, to: Savage Subscription Dept. S-1, Adventure House Press, Suite 1528, 245 East 63rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10021. You won't regret it!

Well that's all for this issue. Look to this spot, for comments on comic news and related material, in future issues of this fanzine. -ed.

(Savage is copyrighted by Adventure House Press Inc. 1968.)

Copyright Quality Comics



THE BLACK CONDOR

(CRACK COMICS 1-31)

U.S. Senator Tom Wright was raised by a condor in the bleak hills of Mongolia. This flying enemy of all evil actually impersonated Wright, after the real senator was murdered.
Besides his power of flight he also used a black ray gun.

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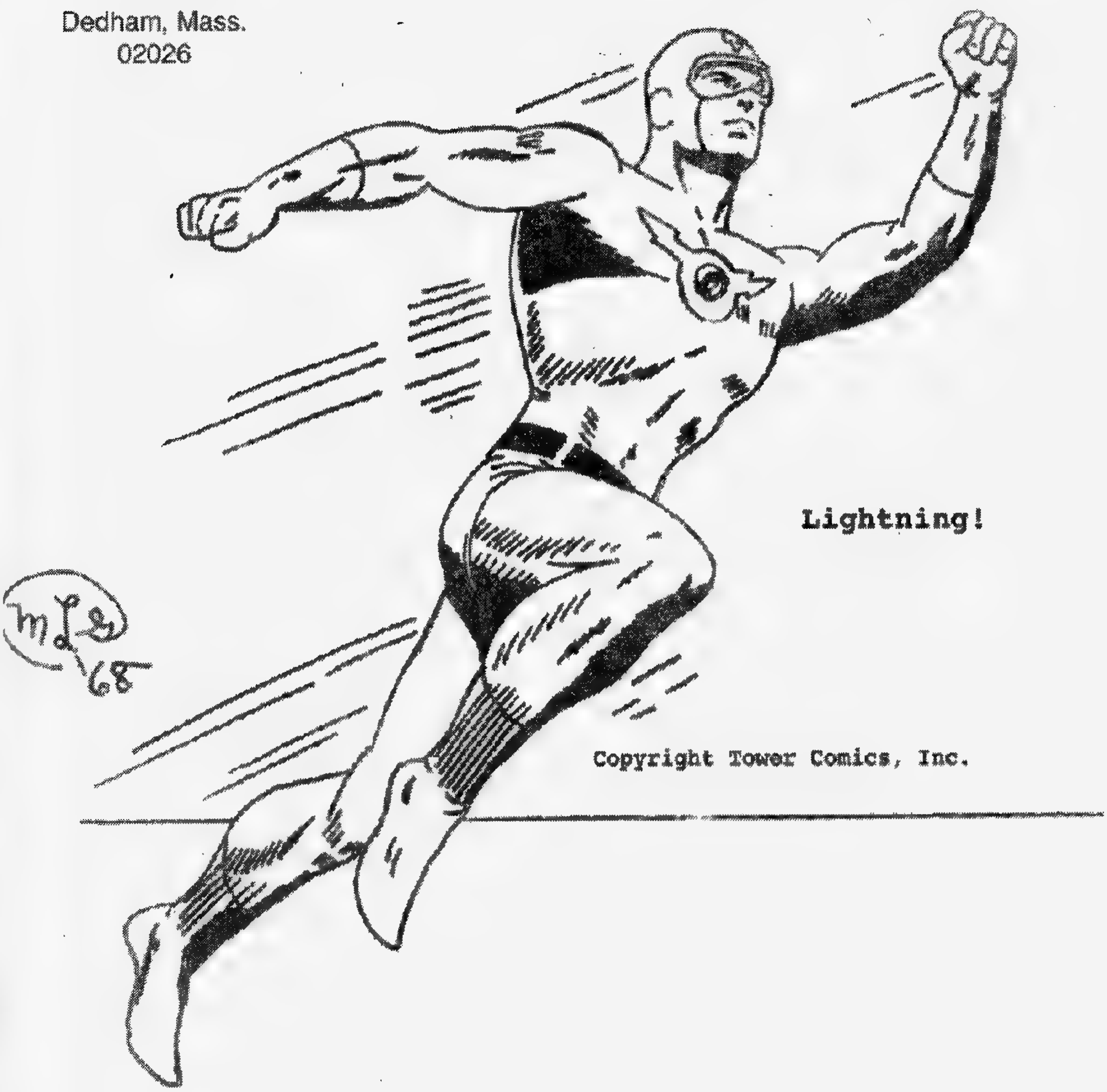

Lightning!

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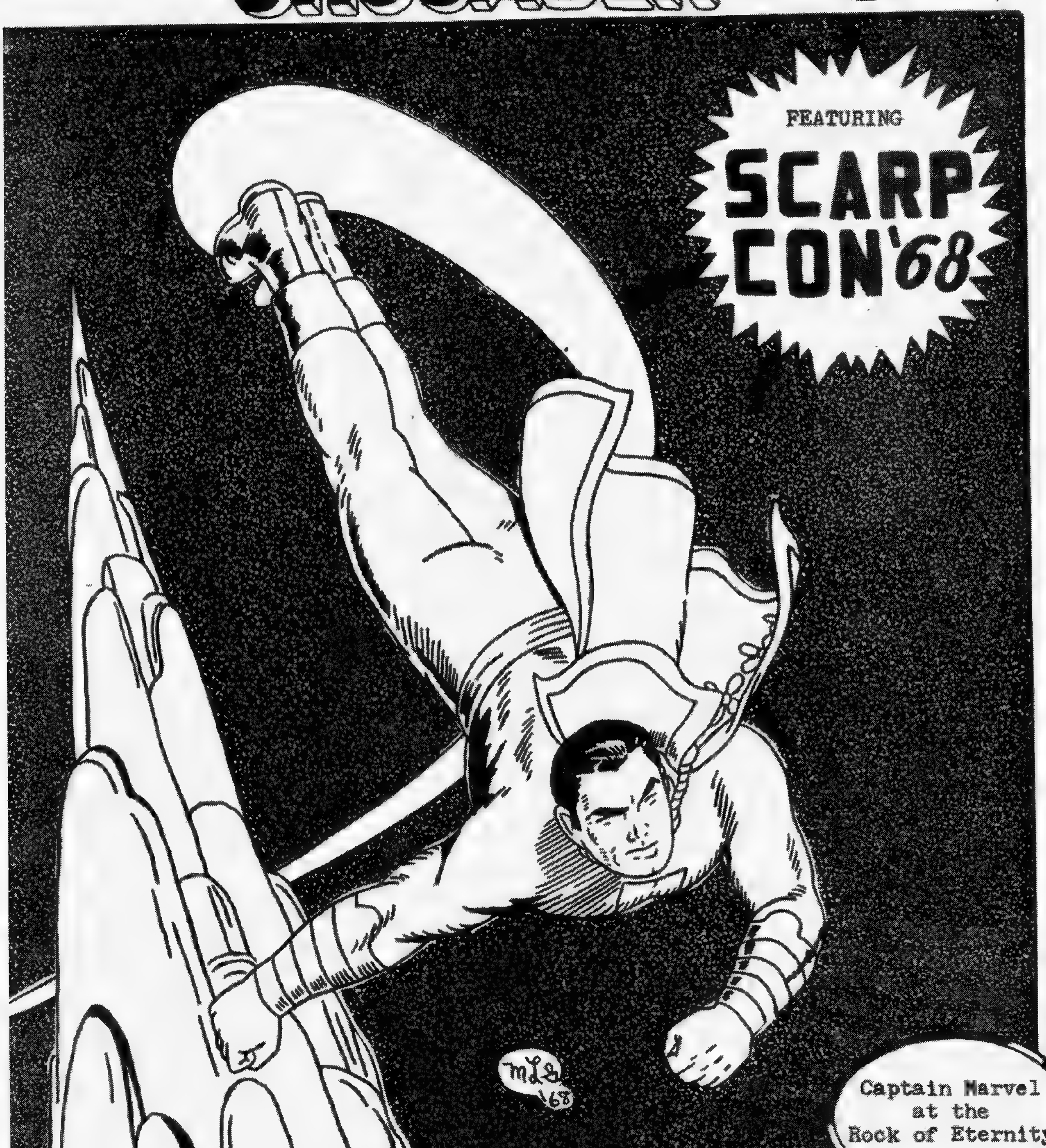
FALL ISSUE

The COMIC CRUSADER

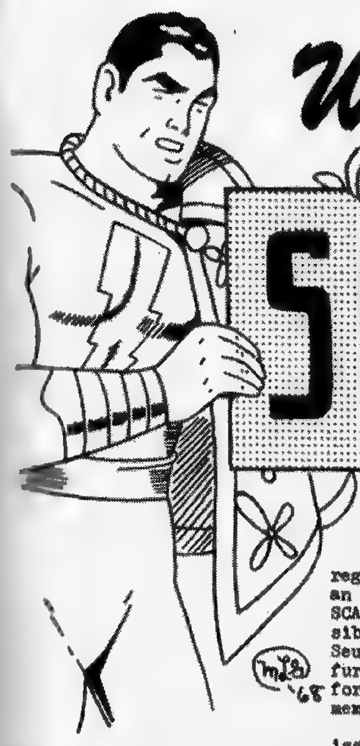


FEATURING

SCARP CON '68

Captain Marvel
at the
Rock of Eternity

FANDOM'S
READERS DIGEST



WELCOME to the SCARP CON issue

Well friends, here we are again, with issue #3 of The Comic Crusader. This issue, in addition to the regular features, we present an in depth report on the SCARP con. The man responsible for this con was Phil Seuling and before I go any further, I want to thank him for making July 4-7 such a memorable occasion.

The only real change this issue is the Pros & Cons column. For this issue only, it is being replaced by the 'con report'. While at the con, I met many people - fans and pros alike. It was a great thrill and I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Some of you may have heard, either by word of mouth or by other fanzines, that I won Jim Steranko at the SCARP auction. This is true! Bob Cosgrove, my wife Ellie and I spent an enjoyable hour or two talking with this really great guy. During which, he drew some fabulous pictures that I now have framed and hung in a place of honor, in my home. Thanks a lot, Jim.

Contributors for this issue are: Richard Gramlich, John McGeehan, Pal, Johnny Lawrence, Richard Buckler and my biddy buddy - Bob Cosgrove (The Blue Barber) B.B. is an in joke I'll let you in on. You see, at the con Bob wore this blue, silk turtle neck shirt, which resembled a barber's outfit. So, as Bob likes ama-super heroes, I dubbed him The Blue Barber - defender of the conventioneers.

Well, hope you enjoy this issue. I think it's the best yet. Yours truly,

Martin L. Greim

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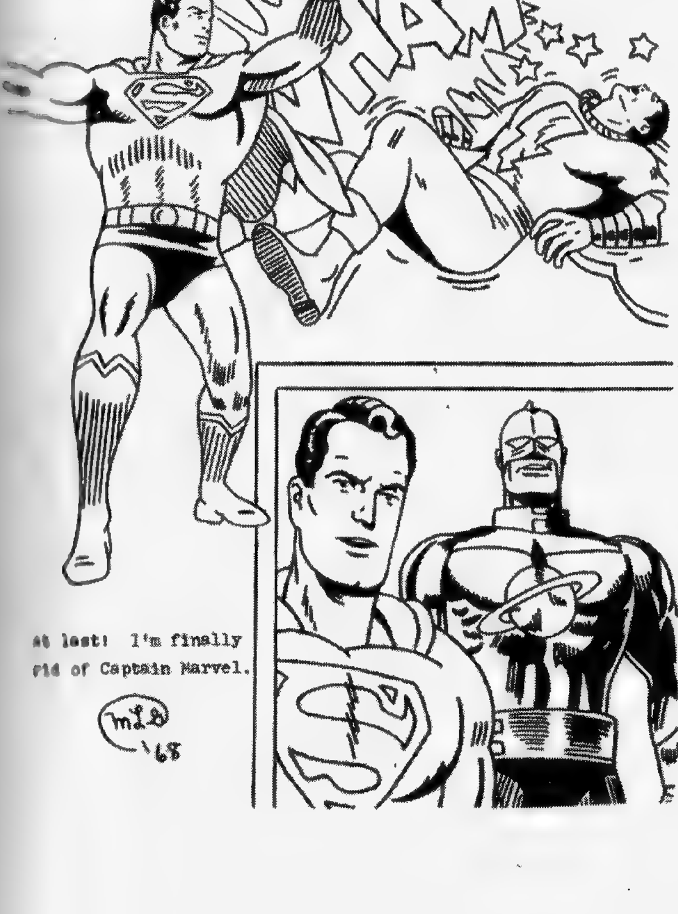
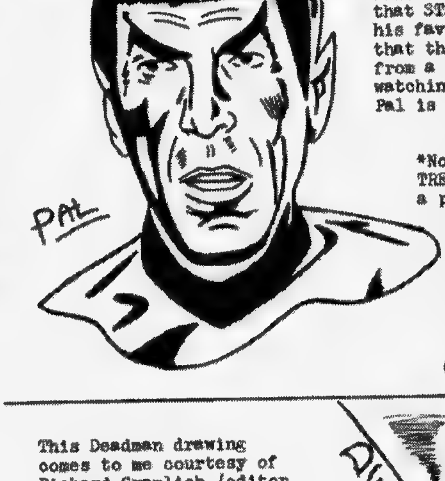
The COMIC CORNER



At last! I'm finally rid of Captain Marvel.

SPOCK & SPOOK



For this issue, I managed to talk my friend Pal into making another contribution. He told me that STAR TREK is one of his favorite shows and that this drawing is taken from a photo he took while watching the show on TV. Pal is also a camera bug.

*Note...For you STAR TREK fans, there is a place in California that is selling all sorts of Star Trek material; film clips, scripts, etc. The address is:

STAR TREK ENTERPRISES
P.O. BOX 38429
HOLLYWOOD, CA. 90038
(ask for a catalog.)

This Deadman drawing comes to me courtesy of Richard Gramlich (editor of a fanzine called SYNOPSIS). He and another fan named Giarratana did the art and even though a lot of other fanzines feature drawings of Deadman, this struck me as being one of the better ones. I believe you can order Synopsis from Richard at the following address.

Richard Gramlich
141 Elm Ave.
Hackensack, N.J.
07601

Thanks for the drawing Rich - MLG

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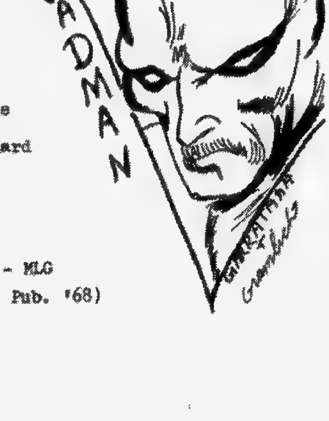

PRESENTING MR. MARVEL

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Written and Drawn
by
Martin L. Greim

Before I get into Stan Lee's con speech, I would like to say the following. At the con and elsewhere I have heard people violently pro or anti Marvel comics. (I myself have always thought hero worship of one company over another, childish and stupid.) Whether you're for or against Marvel, once you've heard Stan Lee speak you have to admire him. He's a real showman and one hell of a speaker.

It was Thursday, July 4, 1968. It was hot in New York. My wife, Bob Cosgrove and I were seated in the Penn Top room of the Statler Hilton Hotel. We were waiting to hear Stan Lee give the opening address at the SCARP con. Stan arrived a little after 3 p.m. and after a brief bout with the speakers microphone, began to speak.

"I would imagine that those of us who are here, are here because we are interested in comics. I was supposed to talk about comics, the way they were, the way they are and the way they will be: but actually my memory is not notoriously good, so I can't say too much about the way they were - although I guess I was there at the time. I know something about the way they are, but have no more knowledge about the way they will be than anyone else. However, I'm willing to try and guess, if you'll go along with me.

The way they were, first. I started in comics about 30 years ago, as a callow youth. Now I'm a callow old man. In those days the comic magazines desperately needed artists, writers, and letterers. Publishers were just starting and realized they were on to something wonderful. People were buying just about everything they would print. We all know the great old names; Superman, Batman, Capt. America, Capt. Marvel, Human Torch, Sub-Mariner, The Blackhawks, Plastic Man, and the Spirit - there were so many of them. In fact there were some before those, in King Comics and in Famous Funnies. However, I'll just concern myself with the super hero title books. The demand in the super hero line of the 40's was so great that it was almost the reason for the later decline of comics, because the quality never really matched the enthusiasm that was put into those books. You could find people, who really didn't write well enough to call themselves professional writers, being able to sell everything they turned out to comic publishers, because quality wasn't as important then as it is now. The same went for the artists. A lot of the art work wasn't as good as it might have been, but it was good enough for the people, who at that time, couldn't get enough of comics. Now, by the same token, there were also very great talents in those days. Some fine writers and artists who went on to much better things. Some are still in the business, others have gone on to illustration and advertising. I'm not trying to knock the people in the olden days, since I'm one of them. We all tried to do our best. The big thing wasn't how good a story you could write, but how fast you could turn it out."

Stan went on to tell how various types of magazines had their day. Such as westerns, super hero books, horror and the E.C. line. He speculated that the reason E.C. died was because, in their quest for realism, they perhaps injected some sex and possibly a little too much violence into their books. Plus, Dr. Wertham came along and we all know what happened then. He started a crusade and brought about the end of what Stan refered to as his "First Golden Age".

Stan went on to discuss the period of the 50's and early 60's, when DC had the whole super hero field to themselves. He and his staff were, at the time, trying to turn out magazines that just kids would read - and getting nowhere.

"One day we decided to try something new", said Stan. "Let's try and put out a book that we ourselves might want to read. Let's forget that comics are for ten year olds or whatever. Let's try to think of them as reading matter for more intelegent, more mature people. We started out with "The Fantastic Four #1; which, as I look at it now, wasn't the greatest magazine in the world either. But it was quite a departure from what had been published up until that time and our mail showed it. The letters we used to receive asked 'Where's my subscription?' or 'Why are the staples out of the binding?' Now, literally hundreds of fan letters started coming in to our office each month. Now its reached the point where it's hundreds a day, but at that time, hundreds a month was fantastic. We didn't need a building to fall on us. We said, 'Gee - were on to something here'. You people wrote to us and told us what you liked and what you didn't. One of the lessons we learned was, no matter how mature you try and make the stories - no matter how realistic and adult you try and make them - if it's a super hero story the characters have to have costumes. In the first two issues of "The Fantastic Four" we had them in business suits, but the mail came in and said, 'Your magazine is terrific. It was different. It was exciting. It's going to sweep the country, but you've gotta put em in costume.' After reading a few hundred letters like that, issue #3 had them in costume."

Stan began talking about how Marvel owed a great deal, of whatever success they've had to the fans. He told of the complaints they had when they first started doing continued stories and how, now, most of the fans prefer them. It was also stated, that no letter coming into Marvel is ever disregarded.

Stan had talked about the past and the present of the comics. He now began to talk of the future of comics. "We're doing our best to improve our comics. Unfortunately, for us, the competition is also doing their best. I hope the quality of the books is getting better, right down the line. About the comics of tomorrow. My feeling is that the comic mag itself is a legitimate form of communication and entertainment. It is as legitimate, let's say, as television or the motion picture is. It involves words, pictures and stories, as does both. In the motion picture, the picture is moving - that's a great asset. In comic books the pictures stay where they are and you can look at them over and over again - that also is a great asset. You can carry a comic book with you. You see a picture once in a movie and you're finished. So, you see, there are pros and cons. I think the reason movies are reviewed in newspapers and all that comics get is a once a year meeting like this, goes back to when comics weren't written too well. People still think of them as childrens entertainment."

Stan's contribution to tomorrow's comics is trying to do new things. Things like encouraging amateurs and trying to establish a place for apprentices and to encourage them. Marvel is also trying to institute new magazines which will contain the work of people who aren't quite first rate artists and writers. They're hoping to get enough gimmics in these magazines, so the public will read them. The fact that these magazines are the work of beginners will be mentioned, in hopes that readers will be as interested in their careers as the folks at Marvel are.

So ended Stan Lee's address, but there was a short question and answer period afterward. (Bob Cosgrove will cover that in his part of the con report.) A surprise for Stan came, when Phil Seuling presented him with a special SCARP plaque. Stan was mobbed, after leaving the speakers podium, but he was nice enough to let me take a picture of him holding his plaque. I found Stan a man you can't help but like. He certainly is a Mr. Marvel.

CON-FUSION*

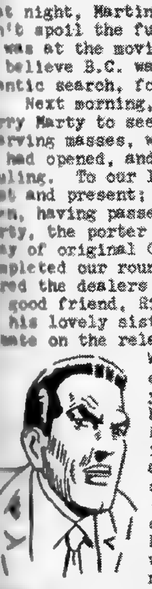
(SCARP Convention - 1968)

(* FUSION - The coming together of masses.)

Written by...Bob Cosgrove
Art & Insertions by...Martin Greim

Even though I hadn't hit the sack until two o'clock the previous night, I was still up bright and early the next morning to meet merry MLG and his wife Ellie, at the train station. By the time we pulled in at Penn Station, 4 hours later, I had taken a blood oath that next year we would fly the American way. Shortly there after, we reached the hotel, and checked into the friendly Statler Hilton. The spacious Hilton was conveniantly located in the center of the Bowery, Harlem and the sewrage renovation center, in addition to being only a three mile walk to the theater area. After explaining to the hotel clerk that I had NOT changed my name from COSARUE, I was ushered into my spacious single on the eleventh floor. On my way up, I noticed various beer cans strewn thruout the brightly candle-lit corridors. That night, Martin, Ellie and I went to see SPACE ODYSSEY. I won't spoil the fun ending by reporting on that here. (MLG - It was at the movies that a series of events began, that made me believe B.C. was a looser. He lost his wallet and after a frantic search, found it behind his theater seat.)

Next morning, the hotel roosters awakened me, and I called merry Marty to see if he had had breakfast. Having fed the starving masses, we arrived at the con about 15 minutes after it had opened, and were issued our tickets by Smiling Phil Seuling. To our left was a display of all the top comic heroes, past and present; painted exclusivly for the con by Gray Morrow. Then, having passed the guard (who had a definate problem) Marty, the porter (Ellie), and myself began gawking at the display of original Caniff, Raymond, Foster, Walker, etc. Having completed our rounds of the art, the merry one and myself entered the dealers room, where the first one to accost me was my good friend, Rich Buckler. Who, I might ad, was accompanied by his lovely sister. Dick and Marty were soon drawn into a debate on the relative merits of Space Guardians headgears.



Whilst the mystic one slopped off, in his never ending search to find a copy of Atomic Mouse, yours truly moped around the dealers room until he ran in fan artist Steve Fritz. Just then Rich Buckler popped up again, and he and Steve immediatly began displaying their artwork, along with another fan artist, whose name escapes me. All three cornered Dick Giordano, (Buckler already had gone pro), who commented on their work. When everyone was thru, I asked Dick to give me some help with my own work, which he graciously did. By this time the merry one had returned from his sojourns and began snapping pictures of Dick teaching me how to draw. As it was about time for Stan Lee's speech, we all ajourned to the main room, where Phil introduced Stan as "A man who needs no introduction."

After commenting at his disappointment in not being able to listen to the usual praising introduction, Stan began a battle with the mike, which he ultimatly had Mark Hanerfeld disconnect, to the cheers of the crowd. After talking on the exact opposite of what he was supposed to, Stan took questions from the crowd, which went a bit like this:

"Mr. Lee, why do you hold back information from the fans?"

"Well mainly because it spoils the surprise, and also because half the time we don't know ourselves. The next FF is due at the printers in 3 days, and unless I talk with Jack about it before that, the little block that tells what's coming will have to read: 'Next ish: Don't miss the most spectacular Fantastic Four story ever!"

"Stan, the trouble with the FF is that there's too much SF. Why don't you cut it out?"

"Well, Jack is a SF bug, and the SF in the stories is inserted by him. The readers haven't complained, and I like it, so it'll stay." (Applause from the crowd, midst cries of "Save the science fiction.)

"Did you have any trouble with Captain Marvel?"

"Well, you probably know that some cheap publisher put out a ridiculous Captain Marvel book. (Laughter) One day Marty Goodman said to me, 'Stan, if anyone puts out a CM book it ought to be Marvel.' I said, 'But Marty, they'll sue us for every cent we've got.' He replied, 'I've talked to the lawyers and they say we'll win.' They did sue, but we paid them off or something."

"Mr. Lee, how do you get away with 'Not Brand Echh?"

"We're friendly with all our competitors." (More laughter)

"What about Sue's baby?"

"Oh. that. Well, Jack and I spent many hours on that. More than we usually do... Well, I wouldn't say hours. Minutes maybe. The baby will be born, everyone will say how cute he is, and then Sue will be dumped from the story, with Crystal taking over. About Crystal tho'...I haven't yet figured out her powers...Everytime I ask Jack, he says "Stan, she's an elemental!"

Lee commented in a tone that suggested Jack meant "Stan, it's elementary."

"Mr. Lee, if you had an unlimited budget and unlimited time, how would you do things differently from the way you do now?"

"Well," began Lee, "I'd do it like Playboy does with.... (realizing what he has said) maybe get Jack Davis to do the art (dirty smile)...I'd spend more time on the writing and art, use glossy paper...and I think I'd set the stories in type." At this point, the pro-hand-lettering crowd reacted by grumbling, and Lee, to the amusement of all, cried"WAIT a MINUTE! Maybe NOT on the lettering." And as the rumbling grew louder, taking the stance of someone deeply offended by the suggestion: "I WOULDN'T EVEN CONSIDER IT!"

"Mr. Lee, it was rumored that Steve Ditko left Marvel because of a personal conflict with you. Would you care to comment on that?"

"(Under his breath) Not really. Actually, that's another of our 'Famous Marvel Mysteries.' I respect Ditko, as an artist, as a creative talent, and as a guy. But while I liked him, I got the impression he wasn't exactly enchanted by me. One day he just came in and said he was leaving. I don't know why. I think I'm pretty lovable, really."

At this point, fearless Phil Seuling interuppted Stan to present him with a special SCARP plaque. Afterwards, the Marvel big man answered a few more questions, and then left the podium, where he was immediatly mobbed by autograph seekers. However, Mr. Lee made a fast getaway, only to return shortly afterwards as a surprise addition to the panel that discussed the job of the editor, headed by National's Dick Giordano. After introducing himself, Dick introduced the other members of the panel-- "On my left is Wally Wood, publisher of WITZEND; Gil Kane, from National comics, and now editor of the SAVAGE book; Roy Thomas, assistant editor at Marvel; to my right, Dick Sherry, from the syndicate that distributes Kerry Drake, etc., my drinking buddy at National, Joe Orlando; and...(pausing meaningfully) a man who NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION, (laughter) and if he did, I'd be damned if I'd be the one to give it--Stan Lee, from Marvel. (Hysterical laughter)

When the audience calmed down, Dick said to Mr. Wood-- "Wally, I know you both edit and publish Witzend, and this must create certain problems. Would you like to say something about that?"

"Well Dick, first of all, I'm not going to publish Witzend anymore. Bill Pearson is taking over with #5. As for problems--there are many, but I don't think this is the place to go into them. As an editor, I'm here as an anti-editor. I feel an artist is his own best editor. The editor who edits BEST edits LEAST."

Gil Kane, who was next, was the first to disagree: "Don't allow any freedom at all. If you want something specific, everyone is a means to your end. I believe in tight control. You need a grand plan or you become disorganized."

Other than Dick Sherry, who talked about his problems as a syndicate boss and why Stan Lee was having trouble syndicating Spiderman, the other artists and editors mainly disagreed or agreed with Kane.

Next came the questions and answers, the best of which are reproduced here:

"Mr. Lee, do you have trouble editing your own scripts. Are you inclined to be more severe on Roy than yourself?"

"Well, actually all scripts are edited to fit the art better. However, you tend to be more impressed with someone else's writing talents and more critical with your own. I edit my own scripts more than anyone else's, and I suspect most good editor-writers do."

"Mr. Kane, did you have anything to do with that Lee Marvin cover?"

"Well...uh...Yes!"

(Continued - page after next.)

PHOTO·PAGE

Wally Wood - Gil Kane

Will Eisner (rear) Tom Fagan

Al Williamson

Leonard Starr

Lee Falk

Costume Ball Heroes

"Will Savage return? Will there be a companion mag?"

"Yes. Maybe. I can't say any more than that. Everything's very tentative." (MLG- I got a chance to speak to Mr. Kane and he told me there should be a Savage book by summers end, and that its companion book would be titled Gil Kane's Fantastic Worlds. I found Mr. Kane a rather soft spoken, deliberate individual. I agree 100% in what he's doing with Savage. Many people fail to realize his book is a combination of an adult paper back and the comic book media. I believe many have judged Mr. Kane to harshly, because of the violence in his magazine.)

"Mr. Giordano, there was less talk about war in later issues of Hawk and Dove. Was this on purpose?"

"Definitely-we shouldn't editorialize."

"Roy, as editor of another magazine--WHEN AND IF IS ALTER-EGO coming out?"

"Well, I'm doing my best. I have been working on it off and on. About half the issue is a very frank interview with Gil Kane here. I have to type everything over and over--A few weeks ago I married a girl who's going to type it for me. I'll do anything to get it out. It'll be out in a few months. I'm not doing much editing and I'm no longer enthused about the type of Alter Ego I was putting out. It'll change with my tastes. I'm sort of a minor league Hugh Heffner. Hugh has his own fanzine that he puts in what he likes too."

At this point a fan asked Gil Kane about the violence in Savage. Mr. Kane explained that he was trying for pulp literature, and that violence is just a frame of mind. If he were going to put out a line, obviously it wasn't going to be a sadistic romance book. The panel broke up at this point, and the fans rushed forward at the speakers. Not wishing to be crushed in the mob, that again surrounded Stan, I ran over to talk with another gent I spotted, Wally Wood, who talked with me about Witzend and was kind enough to do an [illegible] sketch for me. I then made my way over to speak with Fanbooster Dick Giordano. While Dick sketched Sarge Steel for me, he talked about Charlton and his new problems at National. During the conversation, I happened to mention CHAMPION, (Anything for a plug - eh Cosgrove.-MLG) whereupon Dick made a few comments on the mag, which, whether he knows it or not, was a great source of gratification to me. One wonders if the complimentary copies one sends out are read, or merely find their way to the wastebasket. It's always gratifying to learn that fan efforts are appreciated.

At this point, while Martin was chatting with Jim Steranko, I walked over to listen to Stan Lee, who was chatting with a small group of fans. When one fan complained that Capt. Marvel shouldn't be using earth-slang, such as gosh, Stan whipped out a note pad and penned, "Roy--Capt. Marvel doesn't say 'Gosh."

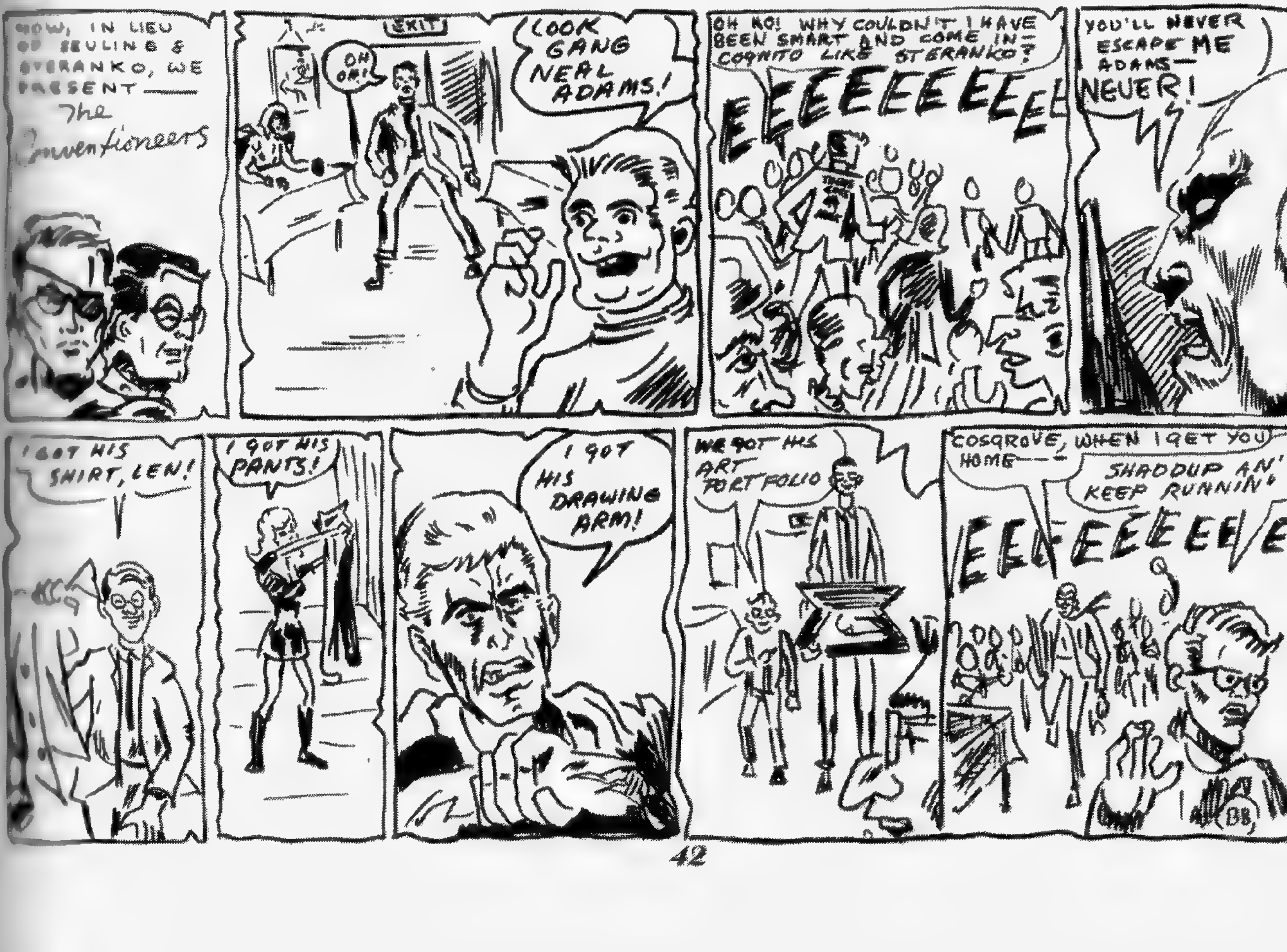
When another fan commented on what a good villain the Abomination was, Stan agreed, and said that he had forgotten about him, and scrawled "Bring back Abomination" on his note pad. "How fast is John Romita?" someone piped up. "John is fast, but he's a perfectionist. He'll have everything done beautifully, then he'll think of something a little bit better and before I can stop him, he'll erase the whole panel and start over."

Stan also commented on reader reaction to the dumping of Jane Foster, the nurse in Thor. He said the readers hated it. It was the worst mistake they ever made.

The conversation broke up when we were told it was time to present the Alley Awards. The awards, this year, went to Stan Lee - Best editor & writer. Jack Kirby - Best pencil artist. Joe Sinnot - Best inking artist. Hall of Fame awards -Comic Book - Carmine Infantino (Adam Strange) Hall of Fame award - Newspaper - Hall Foster (Prince Valiant) Like last year, Stan was modest in accepting his own award and the other Marvel awards. He praised the efforts of the other companies, saying that if they keep on going the way they are now - he may not get invited next year. However, his comments on Jack Kirby praised him to the sky.

(Continued on Page 1 of ditto sheet)

(Larry Ivie's Altron-Boy)


NOW, IN LIEU OF SEULING & STERANKO, WE PRESENT——
The Conventioneers
EXIT
OH OH!
LOOK GANG NEAL ADAMS!
OH NO! WHY COULDN'T I HAVE BEEN SMART AND COME IN-COGNITO LIKE STERANKO?
EEEEEEEEE
YOU'LL NEVER ESCAPE ME ADAMS— NEVER!
I GOT HIS SHIRT, LEN!
I GOT HIS PANTS!
I GOT HIS DRAWING ARM!
WE GOT HIS ART PORTFOLIO
COSGROVE, WHEN I GET YOU HOME———
SHADDUP AN' KEEP RUNNIN'
EEEEEEEEE
BB

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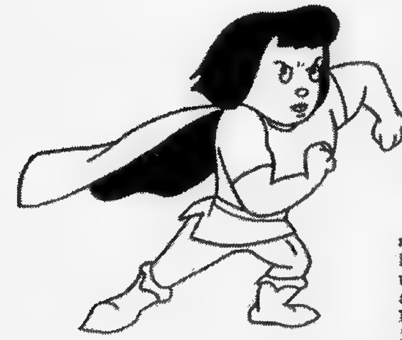
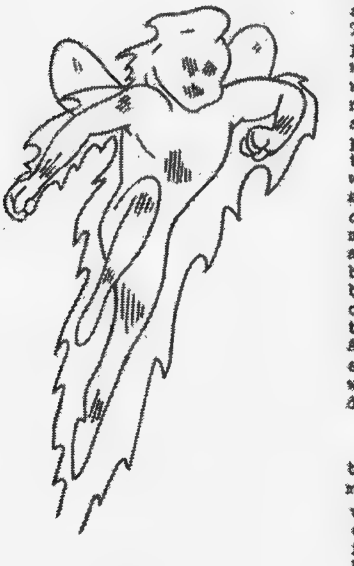
THE FIRST INHUMANS

Part 3

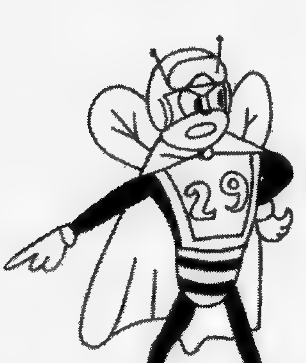
Written and Drawn
by
Martin L. Greim



The Mighty Atom



The Firefly



Bee-29

Here is the final installment of "The First Inhumans". With this chapter I'll deal with the progress of the cartoon super hero from the 1940's to the 1960's and their future, if any.

THE MIGHTY ATOM

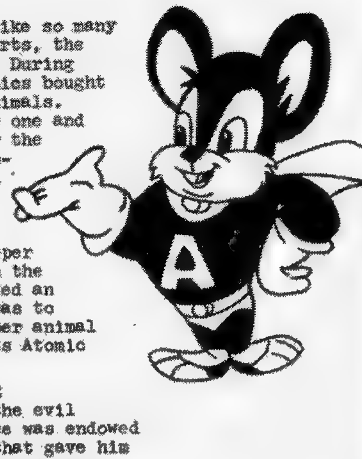
Not really a super animal, but not a true human hero either. This was The Mighty Atom, the super powered pixie. I believe he first appeared in Tick Tock Comics, but this is only a guess for my reference material comes from an I.W. reprint comic. Like many of the super animals, the Mighty Atom became super by shouting a magic word. The word - Pick-a-peck-o-pixies. When this phrase was said Pete the pixie would, in a flash of lightning, become endowed with super strength and the power to fly. The thing that made this comic unique was the background. Being a pixie and living with other pixies, the most common object could start an adventure. A seltzer bottle, for instance, could be used as a well, but it could also cause a flood that would bring Mighty Atom into action. This strip was handled well and was a popular one in its day.

THE FIREFLY

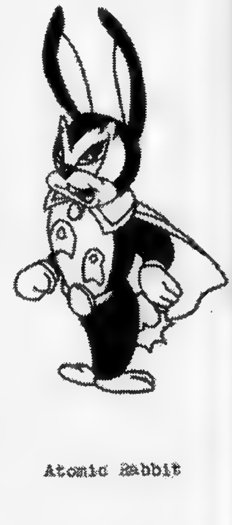
The Human Torch of the animal world. When meek Freddy said the magic words "Take Fire" he became a mighty meteor of flame known as The Firefly. During his career, his flame was two colors - green and like the Human Torch, red. He usually fought bug menaces and was rather a well done parody on the Torch. His stories appeared in Animal Fables and was published by, of all companies, EC. *Note...It was in this comic that EC's only super hero first appeared. Moon Girl made her debut in Animal Fables #7.

BEE-29

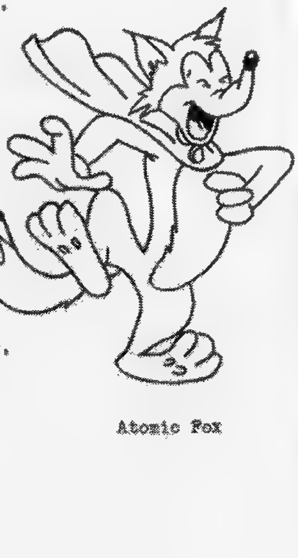
This hero was the Spy Smasher of the animal world. In fact even his costume resembled Spy Smashers. Appearing in Latest Comics, published by Palace Promotions Inc, Bee-29 led a squadron of bees against the Axis insects. His kind of stories were typical of the kind being turned out during the war.



Atomic Mouse



Atomic Rabbit



Atomic Fox

In the late 40's, like so many of their human counterparts, the super animals died off. During this period Charlton Comics bought the rights to certain animals. Captain Marvel Bunny was one and they published him under the name of Magic Bunny; substituting the magic word Alizam for his former word Shazam. However, Charlton didn't just publish stories about super animals of the past. In the early 50's Al Fago created an animal super hero that was to rejuvenate the whole super animal line. This character was Atomic Mouse

ATOMIC MOUSE

Once a servant of the evil Count Gatto, Atomic Mouse was endowed with a miraculous pill that gave him super powers. Whenever he took a U-235 pill (which he kept in his belt container) it gave him atomic energy to fly, see through walls and the strength of an army. This character was one of the most popular super animals and during his hey day commanded a large reading audience. His foe, Count Gatto, was quite popular too. So much so, that he was even featured in a solo story now and then. The whole Atomic Mouse concept was a good one. An atom mouse against an evil cat who, by the way, had hypnotic powers. Also the stories were written at an intelligent leval, so they would appeal even to an older reading audience. It is interesting to note that Charlton's Timmy the Timid Ghost debuted in an Atomic Mouse story, in Atomic Mouse comics #5. So popular was Atomic Mouse that Charlton decided to cash in on it. They created other animals with atomic powers.

ATOMIC RABBIT

Much like Atomic Mouse, except he ate a carrot cube to get his super powers. He got these from a carrot patch where he grew his atomic carrots. His foe was a fox who was always menacing Rabbitville. This fox was aided by two little foxs and always gave Atomic Rabbit a run for his money. Like Atomic Mouse, Atomic Rabbit was by Al Fago.

ATOMIC FOX

Not really an offshoot of Atomic Mouse. Atomic Fox, I believe, was another animal hero bought up by Charlton when many comic lines were failing. The character's original title was Super Fox and he didn't need a pill to give him powers. He was just super.

As you can see, the super animal field was dominated by Charlton during the 50's. However today, Timmy the Timid Ghost is the only remaining character, of note, from that era.

Today they're gone. Almost all the super animals of the 40's and 50's have disappeared into limbo. Now, other than the TV

(over)

super animals like Underdog, there are perhaps only two new super animals - Super Goof and Super Turtle.

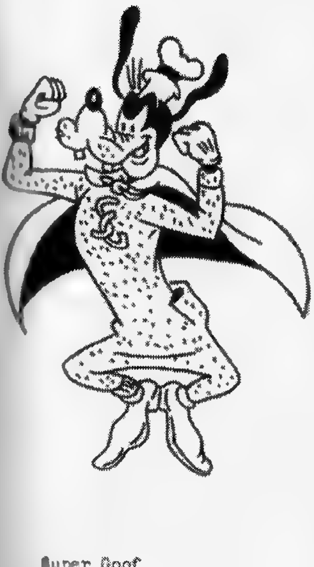
SUPER GOOF

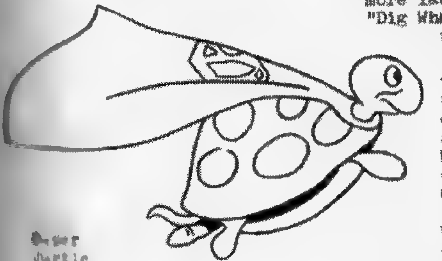
From Walt Disney, in 1967, came the first book published about a super animal since the demise of Atomic Mouse. Super Goof was in reality Goofy. He acquired his super powers by eating a peanut shaped vegetable called a goober, which he grew in his garden. Seconds after eating one, a costume would appear on him and he would have all the powers of Superman. He was sometimes aided by his brilliant nephew, Gilbert.

SUPER TURTLE

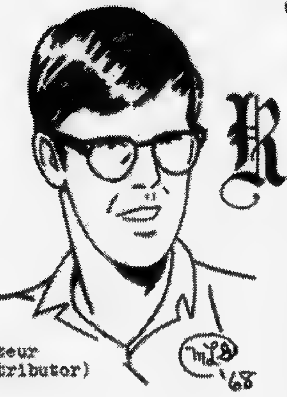
Written as a cartoon filler for D.C. comics, Super Turtle was a parody on Superman. When Super Turtle wasn't in costume, he wore glasses like Clark Kent. For fillers, these Super Turtle stories were cleverly done and a lot more laughable than the "Dig What's Coming" fillers that replaced them.

It is a shame, that in the sophisticated world of comic reading, that someone other than Walt Disney hasn't come out with a new animal super hero. I, for one, think it would be a pleasant change to laugh again at a FIRST INHUMAN.


Super Goof


Super Turtle

King Richard



(Amateur CONtributor)

While at the SCARP con I got a chance to interview one of fandom's more talented contributors - RICHARD BUCKLER. Rich (19 years of age) has recently gone pro, by doing the pencils for future Teen Titans stories to be inked by Nick Cardy. I asked Rich the following questions.

M.G. How did you get into fandom?

R.B. By accident. I read Superman and loved Kurt Swan. As a matter of fact I still love Swan, but not Superman. Then I discovered Marvel, Jack Kirby and that was it. I became a fan.

M.G. Why did you decide to become a fanzine editor?

R.B. I wanted to see my own stuff in print. I wrote to fanzine editors, but at that time it was hard to break into fanzines, so I started my own crudzine. (Rich was a little modest there. Intrigue and Super Hero are two of the finer ditto ama-hero zines on the market.-MLG)

M.G. Who is your favorite artist?

R.B. Right now, Neal Adams, followed by Gil Kane and of course Jack Kirby.

M.G. Now that you're a semi-pro, what are you going to do with your fanzine?

R.B. I plan on still publishing it, but featuring more of the work of other fans.

M.G. Who's your favorite ama-strip hero?

R.B. I'd say "The Human Cat" because I like Richard Green's stuff. He's great.

M.G. Do you have any favorites in the newspaper strips?

R.B. I collect the Phantom regularly and when Agent X-9 came out, naturally I started collecting that too.

M.G. When will the next issue of your zine be out?

R.B. Super Hero #8 will be out in September. All orders should go to Rich's partner Paul Lagenous, at 86 Elm St. River Rouge, Michigan.

(Continued on ditto pages)

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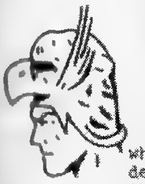
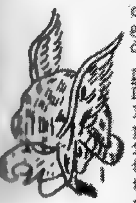
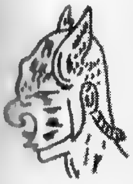
HAWKMAN Headgear

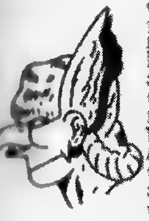
by

John Lawrence

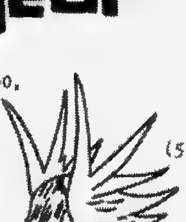








Since January of 1940, when Hawkman made his debut in Flash Comics #1, there have been a number of changes in his headgear. The following depicts those changes.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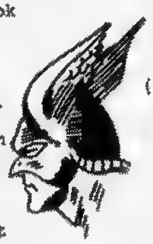
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Drawing #1 - 1940
Dennis Neville version. Issues 1-3 had the headpiece on top of the head in most panels. The only time the mask appeared over the face was in a down angle shot.

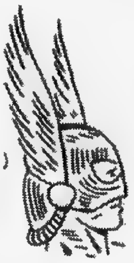
Drawing #2 - 1940-45
Sheldon (Shelly) Moldoff version. Shelly swiped from Alex Raymond and many Hawkman panels look like Flash Gordon.

Drawing #3 - 1944
First Joe Kubert version. Mask stiff looking, but Kubert's figures are great.

Drawing #4 - 1946-47
John Chester Kozlak version Cartoony - mask looks like part of Hawkman's face.

Drawing #5 - 1946
Kubert gives mask flare. Some of the best Kubert art turned out in this period.

Drawing #6 - 1947
Everett Raymond Kinstler version. Another Alex Raymond swiper, but this version is smoother than Shelly's. Much like Raymond's work on Flash Gordon during 39-40.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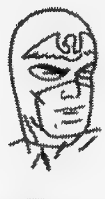
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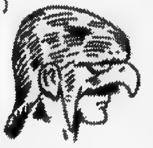
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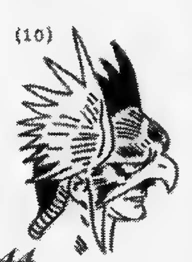
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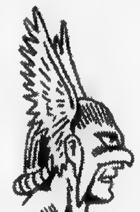
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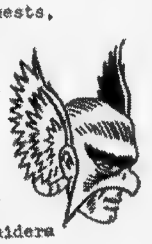
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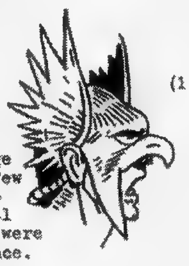
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Drawing #7 - 1948
Kubert streamlines the headpiece. Beak on mask almost gone.

Drawing #8 - 1948-49
The most drastic change of the Hawkman headpiece takes place when Kubert gives Hawkman a cloth mask. This is the last change before Flash Comics are discontinued.

Drawing #9 - 1961
Hawkman is back in his own book, for a Brave and Bold tryout. kubert draws him without wings on his headpiece.

Drawing #10 - 1962
Because of reader's requests, Kubert returns wings to Hawkman's headpiece.

Drawing #11 - 1963
Murphy Anderson version. Wings on headpiece are higher and tighter. Hawkman appears as a co-feature in Mystery in Space and in 1964 is awarded his own book.

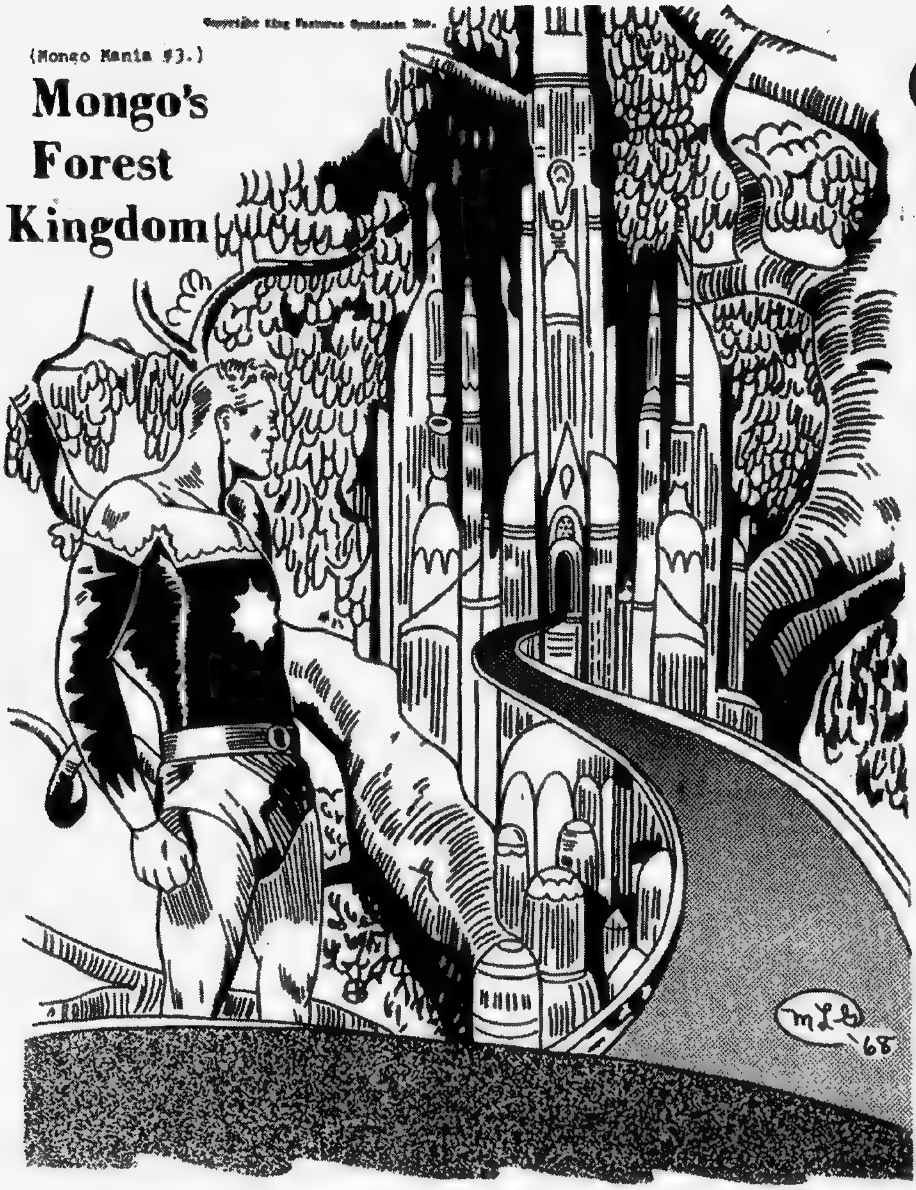
Drawing #12 - 1967
Dick Dillin and Chuck Cuidera version. Headpiece wings have more flare, but art is scratchy.

Drawing #13 - 1968
Murphy Anderson inks Joe Kubert pencils. Hawkman's two best artists together. Hawkman is now a co-feature with the Atom.

*Note - Headpiece change from new to old, in a few All Star issues, is because stories with moral and patriotic messages were published out of sequence.

(Mongo Mania #3.)

Mongo's Forest Kingdom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On the planet Mongo there are many races and cultures. These races range from primeval to super scientific. The region where both are most abundant is Mongo's Forest Kingdom. The forest itself abounds with great, carnivorous plants and huge, man-eating animals. Death lurks on every side. This is the part of the forest kingdom that Flash Gordon was first introduced. His rocket had been shot down by Ming's air patrol and he, Dale and Dr. Zarkov were forced to flee into this primeval world. Flash fought and overcame many forest menaces and finally became leader of the forest's Tusk Men; a group of savage hunters, who at first tried to cook him alive.

However, I wish most to deal with the part of the forest kingdom that is above all this. Four hundred feet above this, to be exact. The only safety from the forest menaces lay in the trees. Using a vine-elevator, Flash and company were lifted to the very tops of the trees and to the kingdom proper. Here they were confronted by a great broad highway and the snow-white palace of Barin the forest king. Barin, by the way, was the rightful ruler of Mongo and whose throne was now occupied by the tyrant Ming. Barin was given the forest kingdom, when he and Flash were the winers of the Tornements of Mongo. He then proceeded to build huge highways in the tree tops and a palace of most regal splendor. This land above the forest was known as Arboria. But even here, two cultures clashed. For in these trees also lived the Horned Apes. These beasts hated the tree men and tried time after time to destroy them. The apes were finally defeated, when Flash Gordon and Barin's tree men tricked them onto a vine bridge and cut both ends, dropping them thousands of feet to the ground below.

Another beast that menaced the kingdom of Arboria was the Harpy Bats. These were huge flying creatures that could carry a man off with ease. The tree men always had to be on their guard against them.

In "The Forest Kingdom", Alex Raymond's art began to take on the look of a draftsman. The utilization of both the primitive and the highly civilized was brought out to its fullest. I believe, of all the places Raymond created in his Mongo series, Arboria is the most picturesque.

- Martin L. Greim

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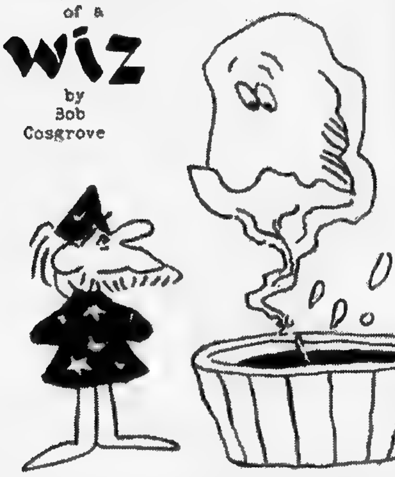
whiz of a wiz

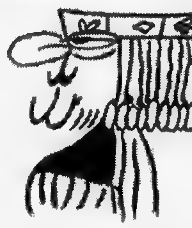
by
Bob
Cosgrove


Hall Synd. '68

There is quite a bit said in fandom about Johnny Hart's humorous B.C., but surprisingly, not much is heard about his better effort, THE WIZARD OF ID, which he does in collaboration with an old friend of his, Brant Parker. Altho' Johnny does the scripting and Parker the art, the art on Wizard of Id is very similar to Hart's art on B.C., as you can see by the accompanying illustrations.

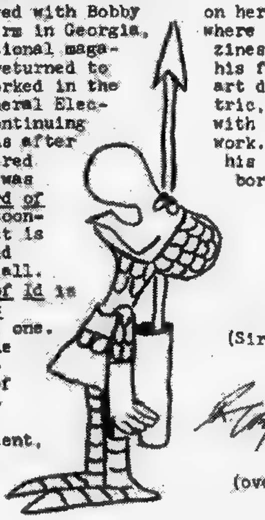
Hart enjoys telling how when he and Parker first created the strip, they locked themselves in a room and worked almost day and night for a week. Unfortunatly, the boys from the comic syndicate arrived a bit ahead of schedule, thereby catching the two artists in pajamas, needing shaves. After they had looked over the samples, tacked to the wall, Hart asked, "What do you think?" Replied the boys from the syndicate: "We think you're disgusting, but we love the strip!"

Hart was born in 1931 in Endicott, New York, and ended his formal training in 1949 when he graduated from high school. Later, he served in the air force, where he contributed (?) to the war effort. While serving his time in the service, he married a young Georgia girl named Bobby. While serving in Korea, he drew cartoons for the Pacific Stars and Stripes.


(The King)

After he left the Air Force, Hart lived with Bobby on her mother's farm in Georgia, where he sold gags to national magazines. Later, he returned to his former home and worked in the art department of General Electric, all the time continuing with the gag cartoons after work. During this time, he discovered his love for prehistoric gags. Thus was born B.C., and later in 1964, The Wizard of Id. Hart is, like many cartoonists, a "spurt" writer. That is to say, his ideas come at odd times in bunches, or not at all.

Like B.C., The Wizard of Id is not a gag strip such as Bugs Bunny, but rather a satrical one. Much of the humor lies in the anachronisms, or the contemporary actions or thoughts of the supposedly archaic characters. Presiding over the kingdom of Id is the complacent, nasty king, humiliated because of his Lilliputian size. He is despised


(Sir Rodney)

(over)

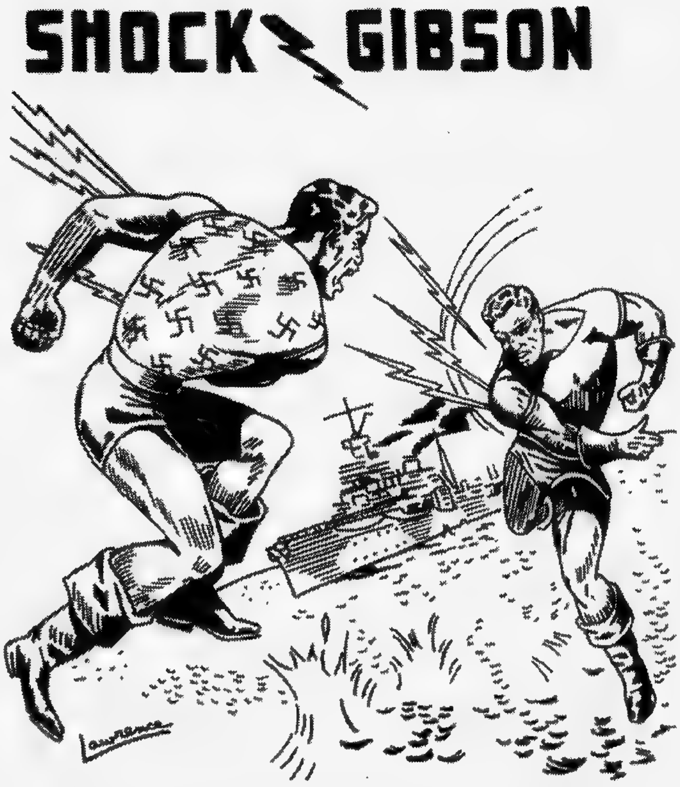
by his subjects, and attended on by the cynical Duke, and Sir Rodney, a cowardly knight. The real hero of the strip is the bumbling, hen pecked wizard, who is constrntly pestered by the omni-intoxicated court jester. Other interesting characters include Spook, the prisoner; Turnkey, his guard; and a totally corrupt lawyer. Unlike such satirical efforts as Pogo, The Wizard satirizes the entire human race, and does not delve into the world of current political fikures and events.

SHORTHAND, SHOCK GIBSON

by
John Lawrence

In 1939 Shock Gibson made his appearance in Speed Comics #1. (A Family Publication) In this issue he discovered the secret of electrical energy and turned himself into a human dynamo capable of flight, hurling electric bolts, great strength and invulnerability due to the wall of electricity enveloping him. When his power ran down, he merely grabbed some bare electric wires and recharged his power. For the most part though, he would recharge himself in his home, by use of an electrical energizer. (A machine resembling an electric chair.)

The accompanying illustration (Speed Comics #13 - 1941) shows Shock Gibson battling his Nazi counterpart. This story came about when a Nazi spy was fleeing from the authorities. To escape them, he hid in the home of Robert Gibson. (Shock's alter ego) Gibson, a private in the army, was aboard a destroyer convoying a large number of troops and supply ships across the Atlantic. Seeing that no one was home, the spy sat down on what he thought was a chair. Suddenly he was knocked senseless by an electrical shock. He had accidently sat in Gibson's electrical energizer. When he came to, he found he had the tremendous powers of Shock Gibson. He eluded the authorities, donned a costume and went to attack the convoy Gibson was with. Aboard the destroyer, Gibson talked with an old girl friend who had signed on as a nurse. Then, out of the mist, came Nazi dive bombers, destroyers, and submarines led by the electrically charged Nazi spy. Seeing him, Bob changed to Shock Gibson and rocketed to the attack. Hurling an electric bolt at the Nazi he found it took no effect. Shock decided to wear his opponent down by attacking the Nazi forces. It worked fine. Shock destroyed the Nazis and the spy wasted his energy trying to stop him. Shock thought the spy would have the last laugh though, for his electricity was depleted before the spys. But Shock lucked out; for just as the spy attacked his power ran out too and Shock clobered him. Shock then recharged his power on a sinking Nazi ship's generator and returned to his role of Robert Gibson aboard the American destroyer.



COSTUME CON-TEST

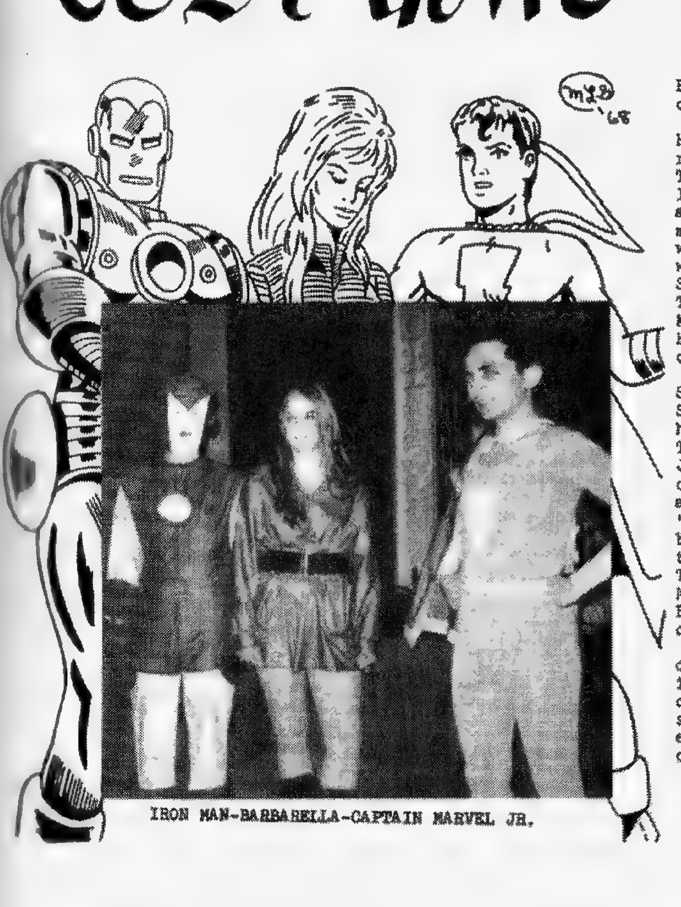
by
Martin L. Greim

The date: Saturday, July 6, 1968. The place: The Terrace Ballroom of the Statler-Hilton Hotel. The occasion: The SCARF costume competition.

It was a little after 9 p.m. when I arrived at the Statler-Hilton's Terrace Ballroom. At the front of the room was a raised platform on which a long table and 4 chairs were placed. This is where the judges of the costume competition were to sit. I looked around the hall and saw Larry Ivie. I wandered over and watched him draw an Altron Boy for a young fan. Just then, my wife called my attention to the first costumed arrival. It was The Phantom Detective. (See photo page for picture.) He was play-acting with some fans, at the front of the hall. Soon after, he was joined by an array of other costumed heroes. The Blue Beetle, 2 Spectres, The Green Hornet, Merlin the Magician, Iron Man, Barbarella, Captain Marvel Jr., Queen Hippolyta (Mrs. Seuling) and the cutest entry of the whole contest; the two Seuling girls, as Wonder Girl and Wonder Tot.

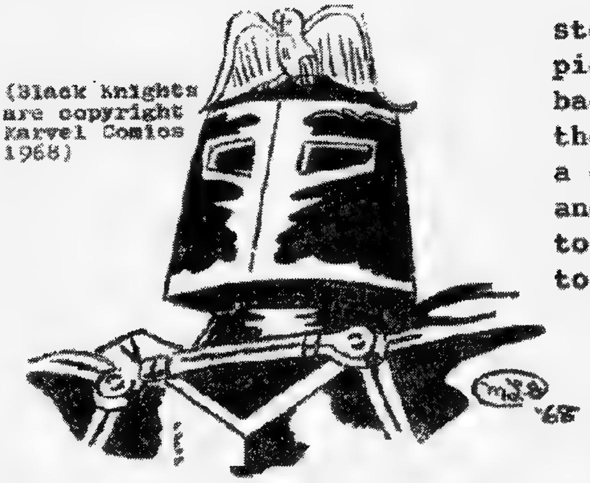
Now the judges took the stand. They consisted of Jim Steranko, Joe Orlando, Charles Biro and Sal Trapani. Phil Seuling took the microphone and introduced each character as he walked across the stage. There were to be three winners. The most humorous, the best costume and the most original. Just then, some new arivals came in. Three girls dressed as characters from the TV show, "Dark Shadows". They too went before the judges. Finally, the judges made their decision. The most humorous went to Iron Man. The most original to Barbarella. And the best costume to Captain Marvel Jr.

For a prize, Joe Orlando drew a picture of each of them in costume. The costume party came off well and everybody seemed to have a good time. An event like this is always a colorful asset at a comic con.



IRON MAN-BARBARELLA-CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.

(Wonder Girl and Wonder Tot)-


(Black Knights are copyright Marvel Comics 1968)

CON-FUSION

(Continued from page 3)

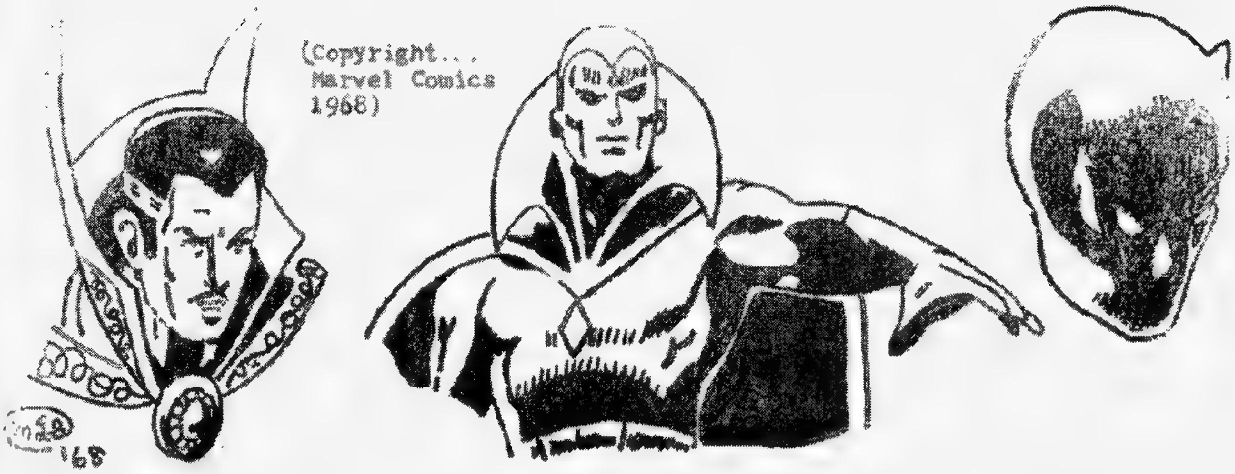
"This," said Stan, "is to my mind, an event that is long overdue. Jack is... well, he's just the best in the business. And if you look at his work, he keeps on getting better and better. Even from month to month." As Martin commented to me, "He sounds like he's quoting from you in CHAMPION, Bob." Naturally, I agree with Stan completely.

That niight I got to bed about 1 AM and still awakened early enough for the opening of the con the next day. The first talk was by Craig Flessel, the Sandman artist of the 40's. Craig discussed working conditions "back then", and commented on comikc art in advertising , Siegal and Schuster, and the way he used photos of such personalities as Ronald Reagan for his art on David Crane.

After the panel broke up, I ran into Len Wein and Rubenfeld. both of whom had their "Mug Books", featuring originals by about nine zillion artists, in their possession. I went through each of them about three times, gawking at the work of Len Starr, John Romita, Pete Morisi, Al Williamson, and many others.

The lecture I enjoyed the most was the one on collaboration by Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson. These two make a great team and their surprising humor kept the audience and me entertained for over an hour. Archie's part of the collaboration is to creat the story synopsis. He then draws little pictures to fit the synopsis and goes back and fits the dialog to the to the pictures. The final result being a closer connection between the story and the pictures. It takes a full day to write the script and 4 or 5 days to draw Agent X-9. During the lecture it was mentioned that Stanley Pitt (the Australian artist who draws Gully Foyle) may possibly work for DC.

If an artist enjoys his work, it shows. When he doesn't, and treats it like a job, it shows. This was the feeling of X-9's artist, Al Williamson. Al gets his background material from movie stills, magazines, etc, and though he admittedly swipes, his figures are his own. Al wrote the first new Flash Gordon comic with Larry Irving, and also wrote the first story in book four and second story in book one. He, like me. is a Flash Gordon fan and has a large amount of Flash Gordon material. Al talked about working with Frazetta on Captain Comet in 1950, and how, in 1948 he worked with Hogarth on Tarzan. As he put it, "I pencilled a couple of pages." Al learned more from John Prentice, on Rip Kirby, than in all his years in comic books. Al also said he wasn't planning any more comic book work in the near future.



(Copyright... Marvel Comics 1968)

Film Showing: having sat through the Captain Marvel only in order to see the Australian film and the DC promotional film, I left in the middle, hungry and quite disappointed. The films hadn't shown up. Martin stayed, though, as he's a serial fan and liked the Captain Marvel film.

While Martin was still at his hotel room, Ellie and I went to listen to Dr. Sol Davidson's speech on the history and "culture" of the comic mag. At this point, MLG walked in and told me that some fan outside wanted to speak to me. All he wanted was a copy of my fanzine, but it proved worthwhile for, at that moment Sal Trapani,John Romita, and Gene Colan walked in and started doing sketches for the fans, who immediately mobbed them. Neal Adams, from whom I was fortunate enough to obtain an original sketch,was another caught in the sea of fandom. (MLG)-While Bob was busy with Neal Adams, I ran into Larry (Monsters and Heroes) Ivie. Larry gave me some insight into his creation, Altron Boy. He told me that when he was a youngster he wanted to dress up as a superhero. He thought he'd look silly in a Batman or Robin outfit, so he created his own hero costume, that of Altron Boy. He says it still fits today. I found Larry had a quick eye, when he spotted the bar-shaped design I swiped for the line under the "Featuring Steve Ditko" scroll on issue 2's cover. Hope you dont mind the Altron Boy swipe in this issue, Larry.

SATURDAY, July 6: Lee Falk made an extremely interesting speech on The Adventure Strip". He told of the Phantom's circulation and commented about a time when Phil Davis was called upon to draw an action scene of galloping horses, and he swiped it from Alex Raymond. Later, when Falk visited Alex, who was drawing his latest strip, he noticed Phil's drawing tacked above his board for reference. "MY GOD!" he cried, "WE SWIPED THAT FROM YOU!" In another amusing story, Falk related how a jungle queen who contemplated marrying the Phantom learned that he was 400 years old. "Let's see, she pondered, "When I'm 26, that will make him...408 years old!"

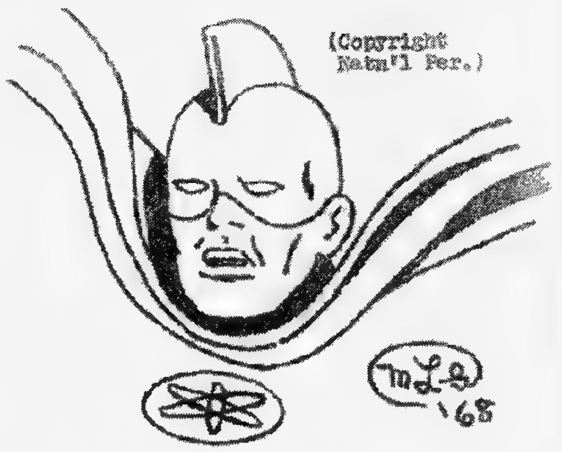
Instead of eating out that day, MLG and I attended the banquet honoring Burne Hogarth and Will Eisner. At our table was Marty, his wife Ellie, Dick Ayers, and Jerry and Jean Bails. While discussing the legalities of Marvel's GHOST RIDER, Jerry was drwn into a debate with Marty on Black Canary's participation in the JSA. It turned out they were both right, but the debate was cut short as Will Eisner charmed the crowd after being presented with a SCARP plaque. The next award winner was Burne Hogarth, who made an interesting speech with valid points, but succeeded in offending some of the people in attendance. In my opinion, the speech was out of place. It was said of Hogarth's speech that it was like his art. Powerful stern and uncompromising ...even in places where it might have been better to do so.

Next on the docket was one of the best: a panel on Comic Strips vs.Comic Books. Al Williamson and Neal Adams were not able to appear, leaving the panel to Joe Orlando, John Benson, Leonard Starr, Gil Kane, and Dick Giordano, who offered to fill in. Kane spoke first, maintaining that comic strips were the result of more work than comic books, that they were a more polished product, and that comic books were produced under factory conditions. This visibly annoyed Joe Orlando, who commented that he didn't like it when people who made a living in a business turned around and knocked it. Gil attempted to clarify himself by saying that he wasn't knocking it, just accepting it for what it was.He added that some artists, like Jack Kirby, do fabulous work in comic books, and would lose much of their appeal in a strip. Orlando, somewhat pacified, was still not happy. Joe claimed that "It's only a factory if you make it one. Gil is a good atist and I wish he'd stop knocking himself this way."

"I'm not knocking myself." returned Gil "I'm simply saying that the artist has to turn out a fantastic number of pages per week. It would be impossible for Lenny Starr here to put as much time into a comic book as he does into Mary Perkins. In fact this is why the super hero is what comic books are best at...simply because of all the work the artist somehow manages to put into his lousy script. This is why all humor comic books are lousy...something like Peanuts isn't possible at th rate comic books are turned out."

(Copyright MLJ)

(Copyright Natn'l Per.)



At this point, Dick Giordano, who had remained on the sideline, took the opportunity to say that Neal Adams put just as much work into each panel as he did with his Ben Casey strip, and added:"so it can be done." When asked which of the fields he would rather work in, Dick replied that ignoring the financial aspect, he would rather work mas a comic book artist, simply because he could change the size of his panels and had a lot more panels to work with.

Irene Vartanoff questioned Leonard Starr on his statement that "Comic Strips are read by the housewife. 80% of the readers of even Steve Canyon are housewives, and that's what Steve Canyon is aimed at" When Irene commented that Starr didn't have Mary in many romantic involvements, which was her idea of what would appeal to a housewife, Len coutered with: "This strip's been running for ten years. how many romantic involvements can you have and still hold the reader's interest? (And as I commented to Marty, what would Mary's husband say?) This is why your central character isn't too extreme, and must remain a sort of focal point for the other characters in the strip. I will say though that Mary is more involved, at least in terms of her reactions to incidents, etc., than most other strip characters are.

As this program raeched its senses-shattering climax, I spotted my friend Tom Fagan and walked over to speak with him. Leonard Starr was drawing Mary Perkins for him, and I watched in spell-bound fascination. Previously, Tom had invited me to come along while he looked at the original art for the Batman-Deadman teamup. An episode which resulted in me leaving my briefcase in Ellen Vartanoff's apartment. (MLG - gee gang, there he goes again, losing things all over the place.) I lost more things at this convention than I ever did in my life. (MLG - You should have seen Bob when he forgot my wife had his convention pass. I sat and watched for 15 minutes while he tore the room apart before I told him Ellie had it.) The briefcase was fortunately recovered when I realized, around an hour later, where I had left it. About this time Marty walked in and we left for diiner.

When we returned later, it was time for the Costume Contest, where my difficulies with the camera were insurmountable, not to mention hard to overcome. Luckily Marty covers the costume contest later in the issue.

After the costume contest we sort of milled around waiting for the auction. At this point John Fantucuio came by, and the merry one and I struck up a conversation with him. Scarcely had we begun when Joe Orlando walked over, took a seat behind us, and joined in the conversation. Never having had the opportunity to talk with Joe personally before, Martin and I were both glad to meet him. He impressed me as very sincere and interested in his work.

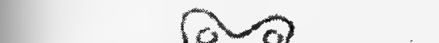
For the conclusion of this article, I'll turn this over to MLG.

(MLG)Now what was to be the highlight of of the con for me happened. There was an auction...with Jim Steranko as first prize. *YES,*I *WON* JIM STERANKO! I had his great artistic talent at my disposal for more thn an hour. Bob, Ellie, and I talked with Jim in his room while he turned out some beautiful pieces of artwork, which are now framed and hung in my living room. One of the drawings will be be presented here next issue, with the lecture he gave at the end of the con. DON'T MISS IT!

(continued next page)

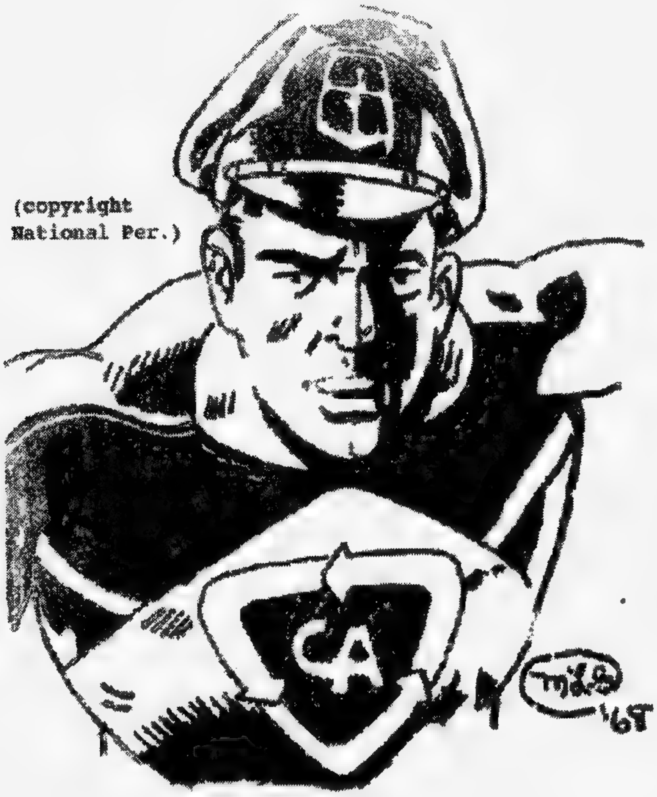
EXTRA -ADDITION TO "THE FIRST INHUMANS" ARTICLE

SUPERKATT



Originally I wasn't going to feature Superkatt. The character really wasn't a super animal in the sense that the others I featured were.However when my friend Tom Fagan wrote me expressing a desire to see him, I whipped up this drawing and info on him. Tom, this one's for you, pal.

Superkatt (by the way, I'm spelling that correctly) appeared in Giggle Comics published by Creston Publications. SuperKatt was always dressed in baby clothes, but when in action, he had the punch of a Superman. He was aided in his war against injustice by a dog named Humphrey. Ol' Humphrey was the one who picked Superkatt up after he had bee clobbered by some foe in the course of the story. Before going into action Superkatt was a great one for flowery dialogue, sort of like certain Marvel heroes. Humphrey on the other hand, spoke like he had a Brooklyn accent. Superkatt was funny to read, and was a popular feature in his day. -MLG.


(copyright National Per.)

During the short time I spent with Jim, I really began to like the guy. Not just as a terrific artist but as a man. Now I like to think of Steranko as a friend rather than as a comic pro. As I've said before, "Jim, you're the greatest, (BABY)!"

It was Sunday now and time to leave for home. We had stayed longer than we planned, to listen to Jim Steranko talk on "Drawing For The Comics" and we were now looking for Bob Cosgrove's ticket home. (That's right, he lost it!) It is unfortunate, but we missed a chalk talk by Milton Caniff and a talk by Charles Biro, creatotor of the original Dare Devil. However, Tom Fagan talked with Mr. Biro and discovered some interesting facts. they will be included in Tom's upcoming article for this zine.

Well, the convention was over and we were all on the train heading home. I smiled and was saying to Bob and Ellie what a great time I'd had. Suddenly Bob jumped up and screamed, "Oh no! I forgot the photostats of original art that I paid for!" On That note, the convention report ENDS.

RICHARD BUCKLER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

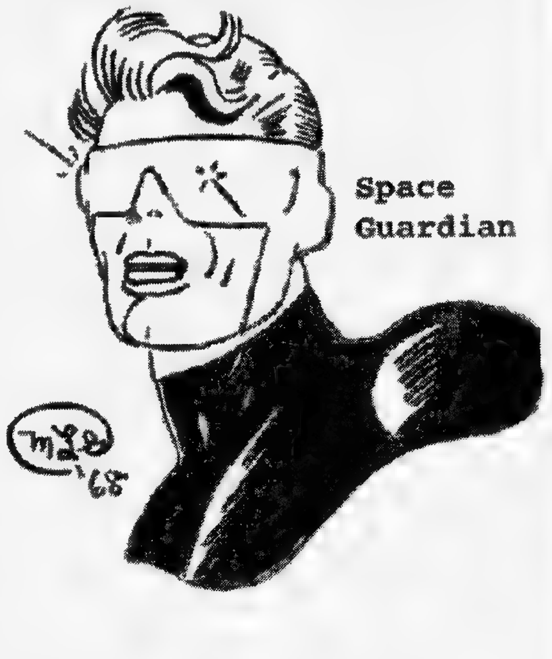
M.L.G. What else are you interested in besids comics?

R.B. Art, like Frazetta's, science fiction, paperbacks, sword and sorcery. I like to read a lot to keep up my vocabulary and to help me write better.

Rich's plans for the future consist of working on the teen Titans for National (If he doesn't get credit on the stories, you might not recognize his work because of Nick Cardy's inking.) and trying to get established in comics. When asked why he went to DC rather than some other company, he replied: "Because I wanted to. They treated me the best and were really interested in my work."

Dick Giordano, when at Charleton gave Rich a lot of helpful critcism and now that he's at National he's giving Rich even more.

Though I'd never met Rich until the SCARP con, I've felt a distant kinship with him. For it was in his fanzine that Bob Cosgrove's hero Space Guardian first appeared. (Space Guardian is the superhero I illustrate for Bob's fanzine Champion.) I really enjoyed meeting with Rich and hope to have the pleasure of doing it again sometime.



COMIC CHATTER

WRITE! RIGHT?
MLG '68

(copyright Marvel Comics)

For this issue the chatter section is completely Ditto. Also the letter column will be abbreviated due to the length of the con report.

Most of the chatter this issue concerns Jim Steranko. First, how many of you noticed the difference in the Hulk's head on th Hulk annual's cover? It wasn't drawn by Steranko, as was the rest of the drawing. However if you look at the ad for the annual, you *will* see the Steranko version. Jim tells me that he'll soon be doing a book on the living legend of WW2, **CAPTAIN AMERICA**. In fact he is Cap's new artist. Jack Kirby will be doing The Inhumans in their own book. Also Jim's sword and sorcery book, Talon, is going to be submitted to the Comics Code. This sort of put a crimp in Jim's ideas about Talon. It's a shame, because I saw some advance art on Talon and it was great. However, for all you sex and blood fans, Jim will have a Talon portfolio in the new issue of Witzend. Get that one, gang. I know I am.

I happened to be looking through a back issue of Fiction House's JUNGLE COMICS, (#104, to be exact) when I really got a laugh from the Camilla story at the end of the book. (Camilla was a scantily clad jungle girl, in zebra skin.) The sory was about a half-mad doctor who was trying to kill Camilla and get a jungle treasure. The laugh was when I saw the name of the doctor. It was one Doctor Wertham. I wonder if this was Fiction House' way of getting even with ol' *Seduction Of The Innocent* Wertham.

LETTERS:

As I am low on space I'll print excerpts from the best.

JIM STERANKO- Thanks for the Comic Crusader. I think it is the only way to handle a project of this nature- offset, good readable type, plenty of illustrations. I hope you'll find the time and patience to keep turning out a book of this quality.

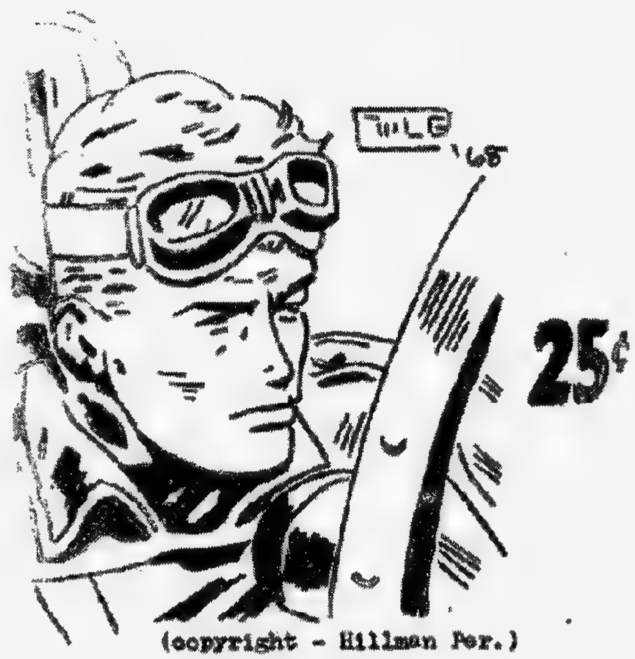
STEVE DITKO- I just received The Comic Crusader #2. I enjoyed reading it. Wish it was longer.

TOM FAGAN-I am going to tell you this, and I mean it not to flatter you but I say it sincerely. To my mind Comic Crusader and Champion can very easily become the best fanzines now in Fandom. You're already well on your way, and no zine of your type exists today. (THANKS, TOM -MLG)

LARRY HERNDON - CC #2 was a fine issue, with the Ditko material being the highlight for me. If you keep your future issues as good (or better) than the past issues have been, I'll be a regular reader.

STEVE FRITZ - I just wanted to tell you and Bob that I feel your zines are among the best put together and executed zines I have seen from famdom. It's a shame that more of fandom doesn't realize you exist. (PASS THE WORD, STEVE. PASS THE WORD)

Jon Jenson - Well you've finally done it. What, you ask? the cover of CC #2...it's great! It's truly one of your best; no kidding. (THANKS JON! JON IS MY #1 COVER CRITIC.)



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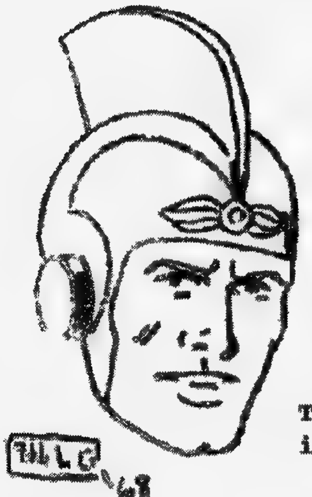
The COMIC CRUSADER
NO. 4

1. Jim Steranko's Con Lecture- "How I Draw For The Comics" (Plus- the drawing he did for MLG at the SCARP Con.)
2. Part one of a great history of AIRBOY by Tom Fagan.
3. Some really great John Fantucchio art



CHAMPION #4

After a slight delay Champion is now on sale.

FEATURING:
An outer space issue with art by Martin Greim, Donna Astin, and Bob Cosgrove.

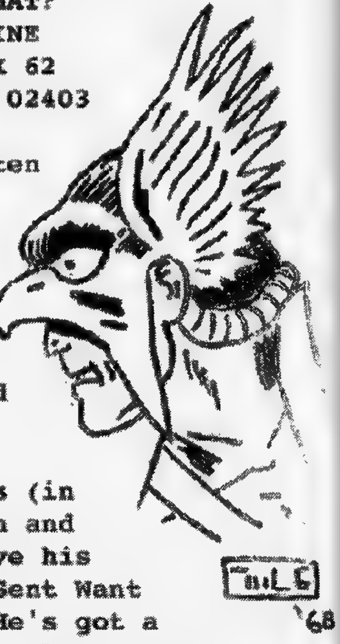
This really unusual issue is only 25 cents

ORDER FROM:

Bob Cosgrove
58 Massachsetts Avenue
Braintree, MA 02185

The special features for this issue include: John Carter Of Mars article by Martin Greim
An Idiot's Guide To Robert Kanigher by Bob Cosgrove
Some great art by the lady from Fairhaven, MA: Donna Astin

HEY! GUESS WHAT?
STAN'S MAGAZINE
EXCHANGE, BOX 62
BROCKTON, MA 02403



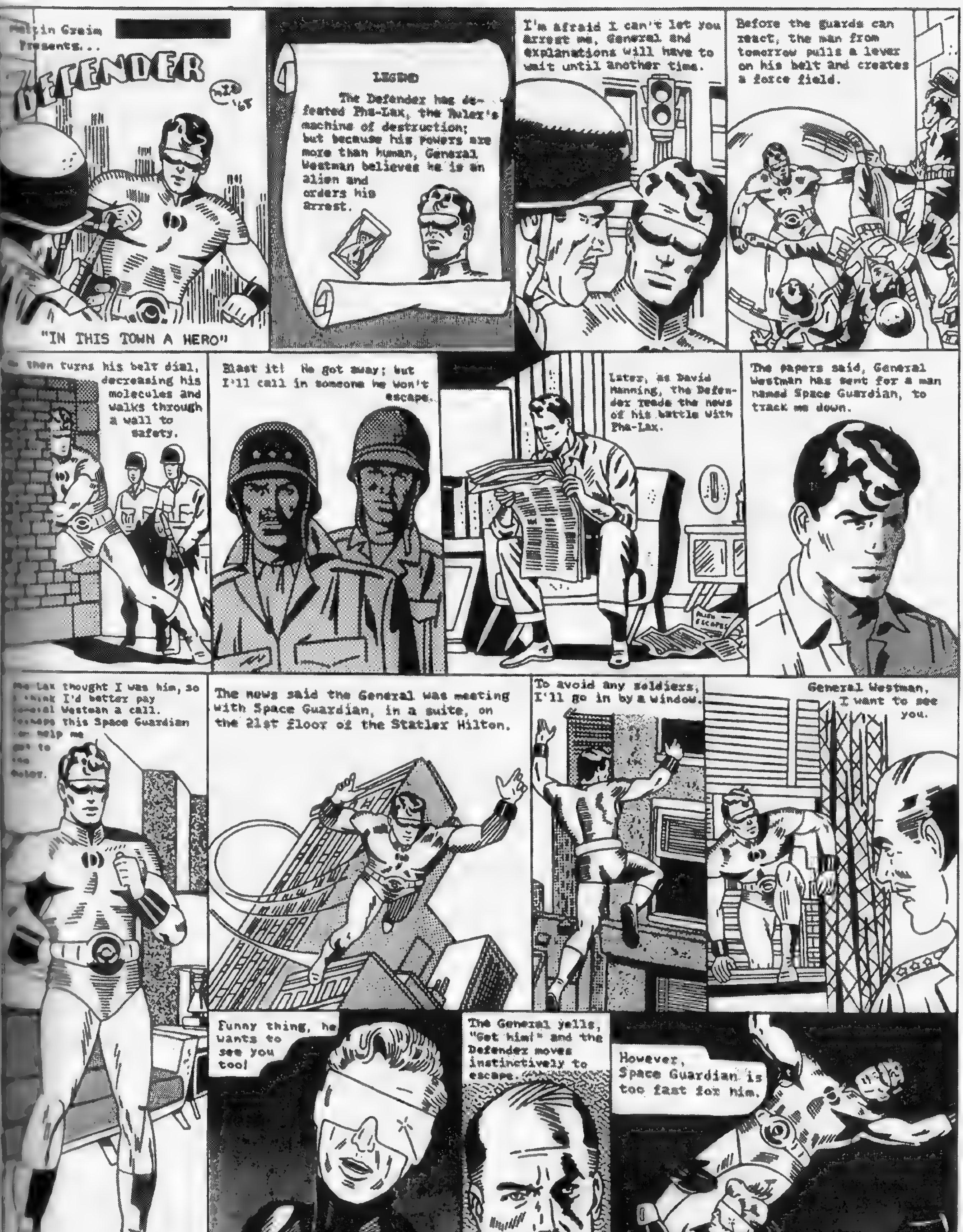
Has just gotten in a whole batch of Golden Age material, plus a large stock of Marvel and DC comics.

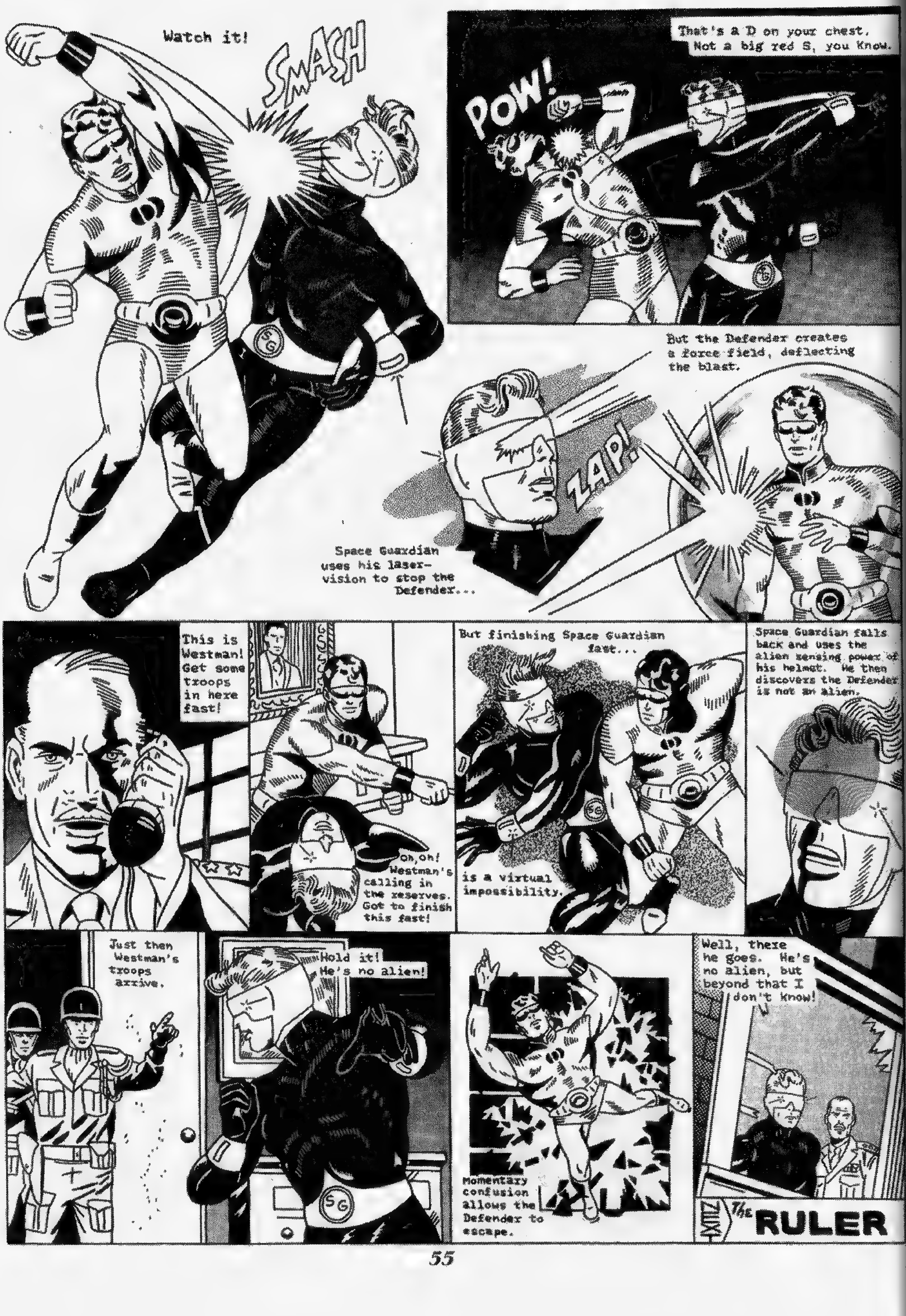
Sent 25 cents (in coin) to Stan and you'll receive his price list. Sent Want Lists, too. He's got a lot of comics there, gang!

Stan has a large selection of Big Little Books and paperbacks, too, so don't miss out; send for a price list today!

(Adam Strange and Hawkman are copyright by National Per. -1968)

(ADS NO LONGER VALID)


Melvin Greim [redacted]
Presents...
DEFENDER
MJG '68
"IN THIS TOWN A HERO"
LEGEND
The Defender has defeated Pha-Lax, the Ruler's machine of destruction; but because his powers are more than human, General Westman believes he is an alien and orders his arrest.
I'm afraid I can't let you arrest me, General and explanations will have to wait until another time.
Before the guards can react, the man from tomorrow pulls a lever on his belt and creates a force field.
then turns his belt dial, decreasing his molecules and walks through a wall to safety.
Blast it! He got away; but I'll call in someone he won't escape.
Later, as David Manning, the Defender reads the news of his battle with Pha-Lax.
ALIEN ESCAPES
The papers said, General Westman has sent for a man named Space Guardian, to track me down.
Pha-Lax thought I was him, so I think I'd better pay General Westman a call. Perhaps this Space Guardian can help me get to the Ruler.
The news said the General was meeting with Space Guardian, in a suite, on the 21st floor of the Statler Hilton.
To avoid any soldiers, I'll go in by a window.
General Westman, I want to see you.
Funny thing, he wants to see you too!
The General yells, "Get him!" and the Defender moves instinctively to escape.
However, Space Guardian is too fast for him.


Watch it!
SMASH
That's a D on your chest. Not a big red S, you know.
POW!
But the Defender creates a force field, deflecting the blast.
ZAP!
Space Guardian uses his laser-vision to stop the Defender...
This is Westman! Get some troops in here fast!
Oh,oh! Westman's calling in the reserves. Got to finish this fast!
But finishing Space Guardian fast...
is a virtual impossibility.
Space Guardian falls back and uses the alien sensing power of his helmet. He then discovers the Defender is not an alien.
Just then Westman's troops arrive.
Hold it! He's no alien!
Momentary confusion allows the Defender to escape.
Well, there he goes. He's no alien, but beyond that I don't know!
XIII THE RULER

CAPTAIN AMERICA

THE HUMAN TORCH
mlg '63

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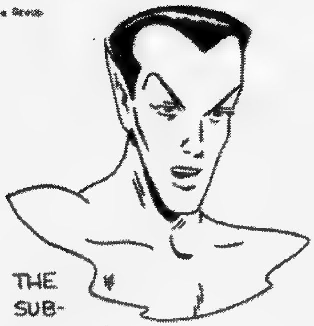


The SECOND time around

by
Martin
L.
Greim

The big stars of Marvel Comics in the [illegible]'s were The Human Torch, Captain America, and the Sub-Marinar. In 1961, when Marvel [illegible] its new line of super heroes, it was [illegible] natural that these three heroes be brought back in a revised version. Many [illegible] this was the second appearance of these three heroes - but they're wrong! [illegible] in 1953, for a short time, the original Human Torch, Captain America and Sub-Mariner were given a new lease on life; beginning in Young Men comics #24. All three were presented in new stories, with each story recapping their origin and telling how and why they were coming back into action. So fans, the following is an account of Marvel's BIG THREE in their "Second Time Around".

THE HUMAN TORCH

The Human Torch - evil's greatest enemy was back - but where had he been since the 40's and what was bringing him back? The story opened with the Torch battling a group of gangsters. It seems that years before these gangsters were responsible for his disappearance. They had used a solution called X-R to put out his and Toro's (The Torch's young partner) flame and then buried him in the desert. However, the Human Torch didn't die. [illegible] because the original Torch was an android) The Torch lay there for a long time smoldering and then one day a terrific explosion shook the ground around him. A peculiar sensation swept through his body and suddenly he burst into flame again. He then [illegible] and burned his way out of his grave. As he flew upward, he saw a giant mushroom [illegible] cloud rising from the spot where he had been buried. Later he learned that it was an atomic explosion and that he had been buried at Yucca Flats, Nevada; where the government was now doing atomic testing. The Human Torch's flame was now radioactivated, giving him much greater power than he had possessed in the 40's. It also gave him immunity to solution X-R. The Torch made short work of the gangsters and turned them over to Chief Wilson of the New City police. Upon questioning the gangsters about Toro's whereabouts, the Torch found they had delivered him behind the Iron Curtain in exchange for the X-R solution. Like a blazing meteor, the Human Torch flamed across the Pacific Ocean toward Korea. In Korea, the Torch asked the front line troups about mysterious streaks of fire that had recently been sighted. Suddenly, overhead, Toro appeared. When the Torch approached him he found that Toro had been brainwashed into helping the communists. With a blast of his more powerful atomic charged flame, he knocked Toro out and flew him to the U.S.A. After Toro had been delivered to a hospital, Chief Wilson told the Torch that his daughter had been kidnapped by a gangster named the Butcher and that for a ransom the Human Torch had to deliver himself into a steel casket. The Torch did and the casket was dropped into the ocean. After the gangsters left, a flaming figure appeared over the site of the Torch's watery grave. It was Toro! The doctors had snapped him out of his trance and now he dove into the water to rescue the Torch. A short time later, the flaming duo rescued Chief Wilson's daughter and destroved the gangsters. The Torch and Toro were united again and for a short time Marvel's original flaming heroes once again blazed across the pages of comics.

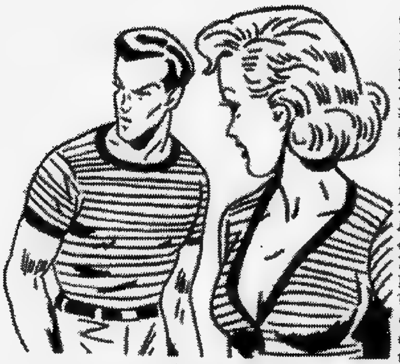
CAPTAIN AMERICA

The sequence I am about to relate has created an enigma since Captain America was brought back in the 60's. As many of you know, when Stan Lee brought Cap back, he had him encased in an iceberg from the end of World War II on. However, when Cap was brought back in the 50's, (a good ten years after W.W.II) he was a professor of history at Lee High School. I have always wondered how he got out of the iceberg for that short time. The thing that brought Cap back into action, was an incident regarding the United Nations. It seems that the Red Skull had crashed the U.N. building and was holding the delegates prisoner. Up to this time Steve Rogers had refused to become Captain America for he believed his work was done and there was no need for his return. However, when he and his youthful aide Bucky (the same character supposedly destroyed after W.W.II) learned that the Red Skull was at the U.N., he realized it was time for CA to come back. The Red Skull was now working for the communists and wanted the Secretary General, of the U.N., turned over to him, to make sure the Reds would win all their demands. Suddenly! - Captain America and Bucky came crashing through a window and attacked them. The Red Skull screamed "He's back from the dead - stop him - stop him", but to no avail. Captain America, symbol of patriotism, defeated the Skull and his men after a brief but violent battle. The next day, at the Lee School, one of Prof. Rogers students asked him if he thought Cap was back to stay. Prof. Rogers replied, "You bet he is!" However, old Cap was wrong, for he lasted only a brief time.

THE SUB-MARINER

Of the three aforementioned heroes, the Sub-Mariner was the only one whose explanation for coming back into action, could easily connect with the one he has today. Drawn by his creator, Bill Everett, the Sub-Mariner was called back into action after a number of ships had met with disaster, near a tiny coral island. The government and maritime officials were mystified and all attempts to solve the mystery met with failure. In New York City Betty Dean, an old acquaintence of the Sub-Mariner's, called her friend Admiral Saybrook, in Washington. An hour after she placed the

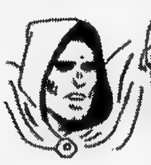
(continued next page)

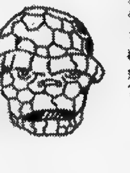


call an aircraft was on its way to the South Pole to bring the Sub-Mariner to New York. Betty Dean first met the Sub-Mariner when she was a police woman, being used as a decoy to capture him. The Sub-Mariner had come to America bent on revenge, after the Americans had unknowingly destroyed his Artic city. Betty convinced him that his attitude towards the U.S. was wrong and he became a valuable ally during W.W.II. After the war he received many decorations from the Allied Nations and then turned his peculiar talents to the enforcing of law and order. A few years went by and he retired. He left America and went home to try and rebuild his lost empire. Now the Sub-Mariner was returning to action. Namor came to New York and several days later he and Betty Dean parachuted on to the coral island, near the ship disasters. The Sub-Mariner soon discovered that robot-men, from the planet Venus, were responsible for sinking the cargo ships. It seems these robots were here on an exploratory mission, preparatory to a mass invasion. Using his mighty strength, he trapped them in their underwater base and captured their robot king. However, when he brought the king to the surface, the other robots destroyed the base and the robot king went dead. The American officials, after checking the site and hearing the Sub-Mariners story, refused to believe that they had been visited by an invader from outer space. The only proof Namor had was an inert metal robot.

I believe Bill Everett's art work on the Sub-Mariner, at this time, was probably the greatest he has ever done. Though this water world hero was only revived for a short time, Mr. Everett's art was at its peak. It is also interesting to note that in this first revised adventure, Namor had wavy hair instead of his usual straight triangular shaped hair.

THE JOHN McGEEHAN CONTEST





This contest is a 'Comic Crossword Puzzle' with the original artwork for issue #2's Defender strip and a whole U.S. dollar from John Mc Geehan, as the prize. The terms used are all taken from in print comic books and from the initials or titles of comic fanzines. The letters (abb) are given after the word(s) when an abbreviation of the word(s) is wanted. If the letters (int) are given, it means the initials of the word(s) is wanted. If a --- is given, a word is to be put in its place. So on to work and happy solving.

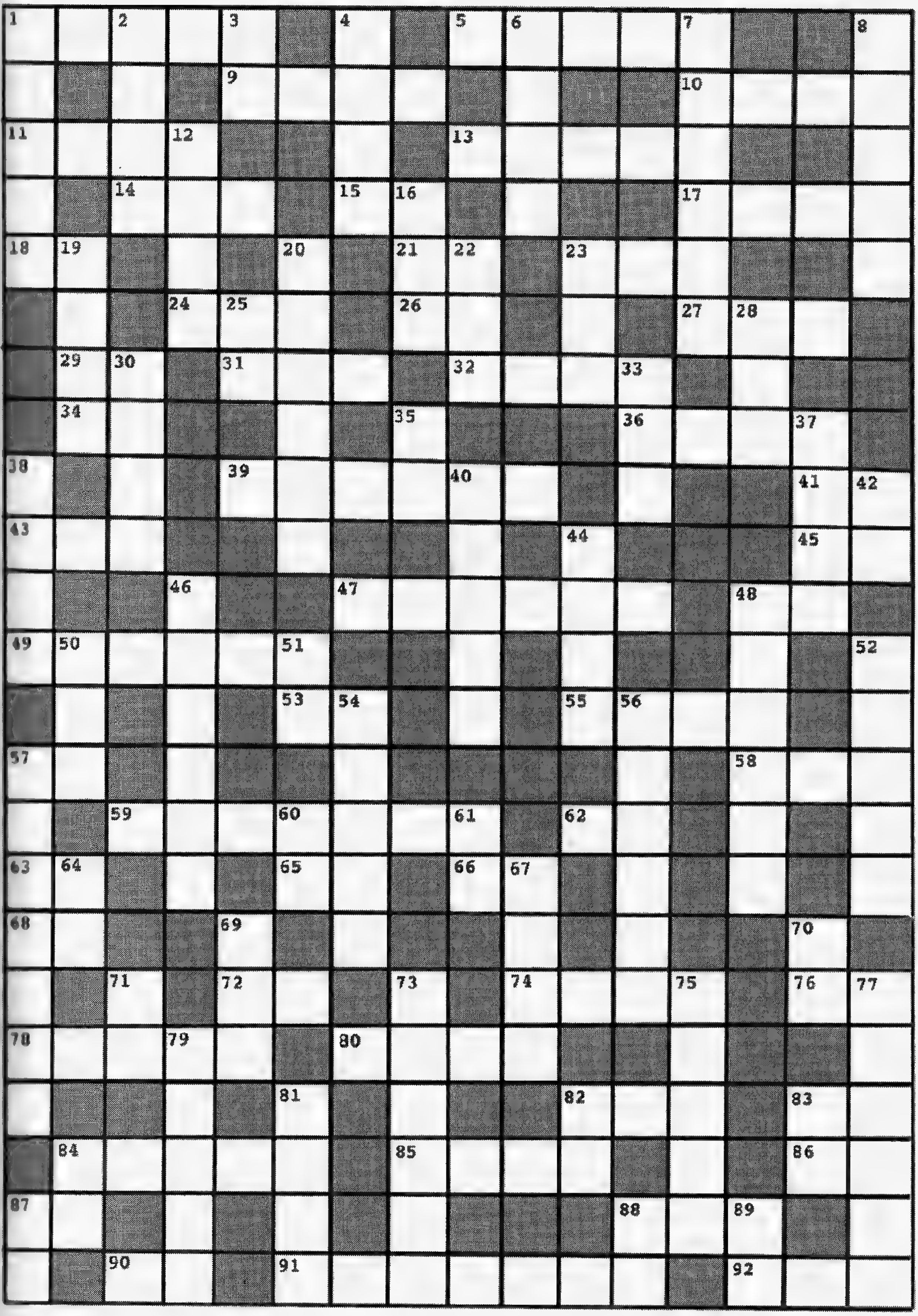
(EARLIEST CORRECT ENTRY WINS)

WORDS ACROSS

1. Alley Oop's girl friend
5. The strongest member of the Fantastic Four
9 Thor villian whose name is Dr. Jekyl's alies
10. One of the Metal Men
11. ----boy (Legion of Super Heroes member)
13. Magnus' Girl Friend (last name)
14. DC writer (last name)
15. Zine published by Margaret Gemigani (int)
17. Superman's girl friend (last name)
18. Fanzine published by C. Reinsel (int)
21. Adzine now pubbed by Bill White (int)
23. Human Torch foe named after a long thin fish
24. Zine pubbed by The Texas Trio (int)
26. Thor 'snake' villian (int)
27. The Bat Hound
29. Other name for Mr. Fantastic (int)
31. Editor of Marvel (last name)
32. Zine pubbed by Fred Romanek (int)
34. The Planet of the Guardians
36. Superman's natural mother
39. Gotham's City's crime fighter
41. Zine pubbed by Mike Tuohey (int)
43. Humblest of the Metal Men
45. DC group who were featured in a movie serial
47. Phantom's sweetheart (last name)
48. Defunked zine pubbed by Al Kuhfeld (int)
49. The Robot Fighter
53. 'Baby' Wonder Woman (int)
55. Hero famous for his hammer
57. Chinese member of the Blackhawks (int)
58. Letterer for Marvel (last name)
59. Policeman from Thangar
62. Zine formerly called 'On The Drawing Board'
63. Zine pubbed by Don Thompson (int)
65. Fantastic Four villian who is 'impossible' (int)
66. DC villian who collects hats (int)
68. Artist of Green Arrow (int)
72. Defunked zine pubbed by Margaret Gemigani (& R. Weingroff)
74. Hulk's nemesis (last name)
76. A deceased Howling Commando member (int)
78. Secretary to Tony Stark (last name)
80. Defunked zine pubbed by Dick Lupoff
82. John Chambers abb. for his zine 'Fantastic'
83. A Defunked zine pubbed by Paul Feola & Gerard Jones
84. The Magic Agent (last name)
85. One of the three mighty demons of pre-history (from JLA)
86. Zine pubbed by James Rosson (int)
87. Defunked zine pubbed by Buddy Saunders
88. Robert 'Rebel' Ralston (int)
90. Zine pubbed by Bill Dubay (int)
91. JLA villian whose 'desperate' (has a third eye)
92. Defunked zine devoted to Krazy Kat (int)

WORDS DOWN

1. Superman's pal
2. A Blackhawk member
3. Defunked zine pubbed by B&C Dubay (int)
4. Rann's champion (first name)
7. Inker of the Flash (last name)
8. Flying member of the X-Men
12. Dr. B. Banner's girl friend (last name)
16. One-shot comic checklist pubbed by G.B. Love (int)
19. Dr. Solar's nemesis
20. X-Men member
22. Zine pubbed by C. Reinsel
23. Letterer for Marvel (last name)
25. Defunked zine pubbed by Farley Holman
28. Defunked zine pubbed by B. Bubnis Jr.
30. Alanna's home world
33. Archie 'insect' villian
35. Artist of Korak & Magnus (int)
37. Zine pubbed by Bruce Pelz
38. Smallest member of the JLA
40. Peter Parker's girl friend (last name)
42. Zine pubbed by Rudy Frankie (int)
44. Barry Allen's girl friend (last name)
46. Small size Marvel hero
48. Gotham City's Police Commissioner (last name)
50. Zine pubbed by Mike Organek (int)
51. Zine pubbed by Fred Norwood (int)
52. She had a crush on Hawkman (last name)
54. ------ Tomorrow
56. Defunked zine pubbed by J. Gleb
57. X-Men member
60. Defunked zine pubbed by B. White (int)
61. Doom Patrol member (int)
64. The first and most famous of the comic zines (int)
67. Zine pubbed by Larry Herndon
69. 'Special' zine pubbed by G.B. Love (int)
70. Boy who can control the Hulk (int)
71. Comic featuring Dr. Strange (int)
73. Green Lantern's sweetheart (last name) (old sweetheart)
75. Green Lantern villian who uses sound
77. Zine pubbed by Paul Moslander
79. Firey member of the Fantastic Four (last name)
81. Heaviest of the Metal Men
82. Zine pubbed by G.B. Love
83. Zine pubbed by Ronn Foss for faneds
84. Zine pubbed by Bob Butts (int)
87. Zine pubbed by Robert Jennings (int)
88. Kanjar -- (JLA villian)
89. Artist of Aquaman (pre '68)



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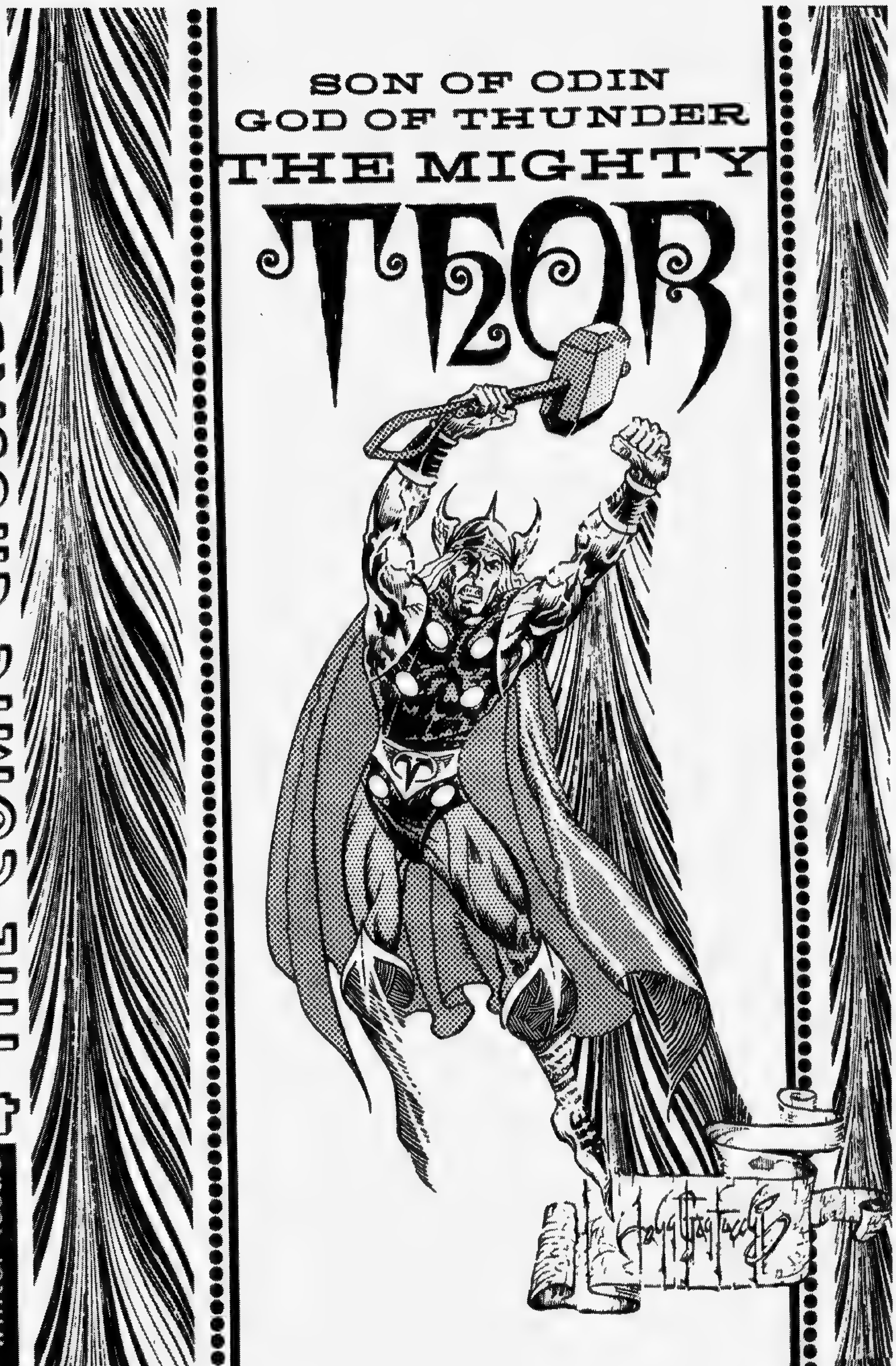
SON OF ODIN
GOD OF THUNDER
THE MIGHTY
THOR

CRUSADER COMMENTS

This issue has been a particularly gratifying one for me. I say this, because I've amassed in these pages material of some of my favorite artists.

Jim Steranko was kind enough to send me much needed photos of himself and I'm also publishing the Fury drawing he did for me at the SCARP Con. The drawing is, of course, reduced - but just imagine the magnitude of it enlarged 50%. It's mind stagering. Since the con, I've talked to Jim a few times and I must say he's one of the greatest guys I've met in quite some time.

Next, Steve Ditko thrilled me by sending me a drawing of his Mr. A character. Boy - Does that make an issue!

Tom Fagan, in my opinion one of the greatest writers in fandom, started his Airboy article in this issue.

Bob Cosgrove was on hand; and I'd hate to think of trying to put out an issue without him.

A new contributor, Joe Kurnava, provided a great Aquaman drawing and STEVE FRITZ, another of fandom's greats, sent art for this issue. You'll be seeing more of Steve's work next issue.

Last, but not least - I am very pleased, this issue, to have JOHN G. PANTUCCHIO as a contributor. The photo, in the upper right hand corner of this page, is one I took of John and his lovely wife at the con. I met John, for the first time, at the SCARP Con and it was really a thrill. I've been a fan of his for quite some time, so you can imagine my elation when I secured his talents. John did the cover for this issue and two fabulous spot illos to boot.

IMPORTANT NEWS!!!

Starting next issue - Comic Crusader will be 35¢. It will have more offset material and be mailed in an envelope. (This issue is being mailed in an envelope too, at a loss to ye-editor.)

Also, with Issue #5, you can subscribe for 4 issues. (Only 4 please!) 4 issues for $1.40. People who have ordered issues at 25¢ per copy will have their subscriptions adjusted.

Begining with this issue, we introduce a pull-out ditto supplement. This part of The Comic Crusader will not only feature a letter column, but related fandom material as well. Material such as....Information on Golden Age Heroes - Any fan news we come across - Occasional adds for zines we feel worthy of your reading - and anything else we think will be of interest to you in fandom.

The Comic Crusader is now being distributed in England by English fan - DEREK SKINN, 116 Western Rd, Goole, Yorkshire, England. This gives C.C. sort of an international flavor. Welcome aboard, you fans in Great Britain.

THE COMIC CRUSADER, Vol. 1 #4, Winter Issue - Dec. 1968. Pub. 4 times a year by Martin L. Greim, Box 132, Dedham, Mass. as a non profit enterprise for students of comic art. Price 35¢ per issue. 4 issue subscription $1.40.

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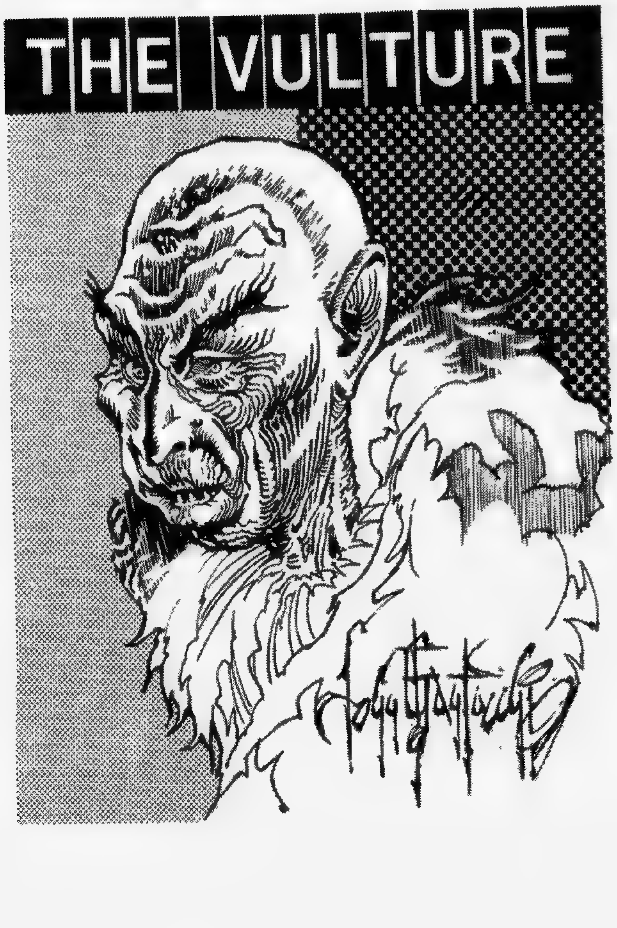

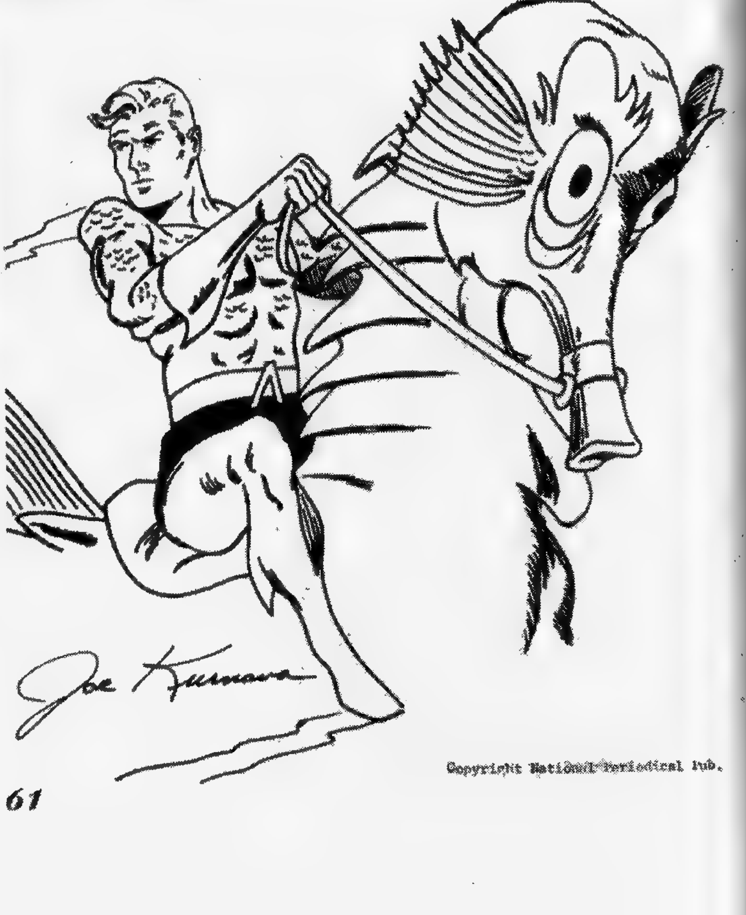

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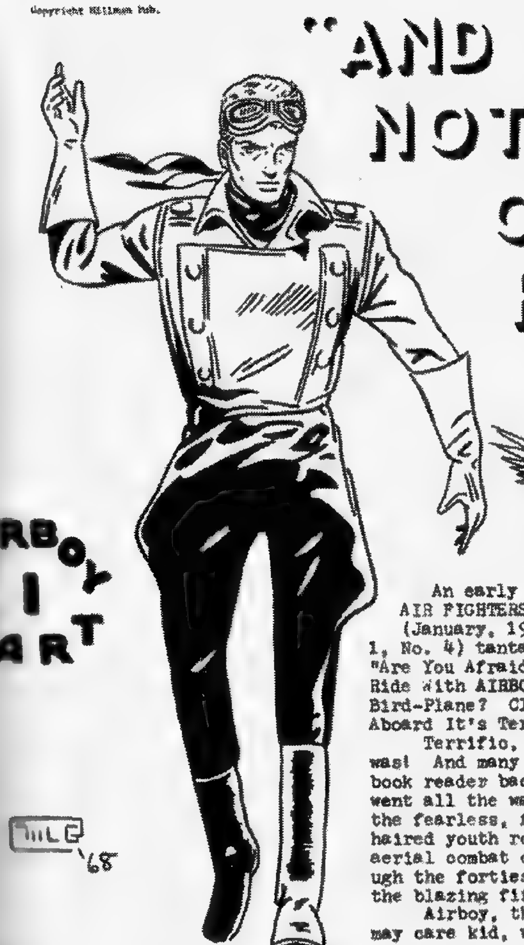
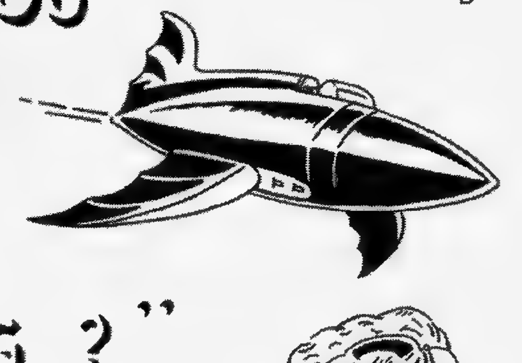
Artist
Martin L. Greim

"AND DID YOU NOT HEAR OF A HERO YOUNG ?"

Written by
Tom Fagan





AIRBOY PART I

An early issue of AIR FIGHTERS COMICS (January, 1943, Vol. 1, No. 4) tantalized "Are You Afraid?...To Ride With AIRBOY In His Bird-Plane? Climb Aboard It's Terrific!!"

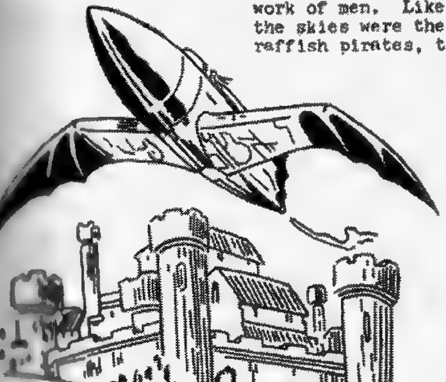
Terrific, indeed it was! And many a comic book reader back then went all the way with the fearless, flaxen-haired youth roaring in aerial combat out through the forties and into the blazing fifties.

Airboy, the devil-may care kid, with a [illegible] machine that flew like a bird. Airboy and Birdie. [illegible]able, coursing out of the skies giving wings to imagination and for a decade and more, capturing their never-to-be-forgotten place in the saga of comic book history.

America was at war when AIR FIGHTERS COMICS Vol. 1, No.2, November, 1942, hit the stands. To the east lay Japan whose [illegible] tentacles of conquest had already stretched across the Pacific first to bomb Pearl Harbor and then one by one assimilating island strongholds on a path leading to the Americas.

To the west was Germany, whose war machine had already laid waste to ancient capitals of Europe. Cities lay in ruins and only Great Britain and Russia were of sufficient fighting strength to hold partially at bay the mechanized might of the Axis.

And when Japanese treachery at Pearl Harbor brought America out of comparative complacency to declare war, both against the Land of the Rising Sun and the Fatherland---a new breed of warrior had already been born. THE PILOT, no matter his nationality, was a new kind of fighting man, born of a new age of warfare. Planes of World War I were playthings compared to aircraft of World War II. The airplane at last had come into its own. The nation that ruled the skies would hold the upper hand. And thus was born a new hero. The pilot! Little more than boys, they were doing the work of men. Like bucaneers of old the skies were their sea. And like raffish pirates, the Allied airmen donned an appearance studiedly unmilitary. Worn leather jackets with squadron insignia loose headgear set at jaunty angles, flowing scarves and boots --this was the uniform of the day.


[illegible] Monastery

Considering at one point in the early days of the war, the Germans were hurling an average of 1,000 Luftwaffe planes daily into the skies against the British--the glamor was ephemeral, death was quick and one's friend of the day before a statistic by the night hence.

America's own wings were quick to unfurl. And heroes were made in a moment of dive-bombing Japanese aircraft or downing a Messerschmitt 109. The Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress would become the best known American plane of World War II because of its famed bombing of Germany. Five years and a little more than 11 months after Adolf Hitler invaded Poland, four American B-29's were to appear August 6, 1945 over Hiroshima and a new symbol of fear came into being---the mushroom cloud of an atomic bomb blast.

All that lay in the future, however. In the interum to come, the planes of World War II were many and famous. The British had their Hurricanes, Defiants and Spitfires. The Germans, their Junkers, Messerschmitts, Dorniers and Focke-wulfs. Americans boasted ....Thunderbolts, Mustangs, P-38's, Fortresses and Liberators. Italy had its Fiats, Russia its Yak. Japan marshalled its Kawasaki Hien (Tonys), Nakajima B5N1 (Kates) and the most widely-known, Zeros.

America was air-conscious. The kids caught the fever. Planes became an obsession with many. Countless school notebooks of the day were decorated with carefully drawn aircraft, sketched slyly in classroom tedium. Few were the kids who couldn't identify any aircraft merely by seeing a silhouette of same.

This was the atmosphere in which Airboy was created. Hillman Periodicals, Inc., publishers, had a sure thing on their hands. For an already eager audience of comic book readers by the thousands waited only for the inevitable--a magazine that would cater to their tastes.

Hillman hit hard with that, November, 1942, "first." Slashed in bold lettering across the upper right hand corner was "ONLY 10¢ NOTHING LIKE IT!!" The double exclamation marks left little doubt that a new, fast moving treatment was in store.

AIR FIGHTERS COMICS! The name alone was enough to tempt dimes from pockets. And under the colorful title logo descending in blocked ribbon form down the left side of the cover were new heroes to consider.

Pictured First--"The Prowling Skywolf," next, "The Iron Ace," then the dark lady herself "Black Angel," followed by "The Flying Dutchman," and the rest of the ribbon unfurling out across the cover bottom to read, "Greatest Comic Book Yet!! ALL NEW!!" All this serving as a border outline to highlight the headline attraction--Airboy!

There pictured against the hated symbol of the Rising Sun was the fabled Birdplane itself. Airboy in the cockpit maneuvered two machine guns to pour out twin streams of death, whose colored columns shafted with unerring accuracy down to where:

A Japanese pilot was rising up out of the cockpit of his own plane, his hands clutching agonizingly at his throat while streams of blood whipped from each corner of his mouth.

A yellow question mark posed: "WHO IS AIRBOY? HE'S WHAT YOU'VE WAITED FOR! SEE INSIDE!!

Holding true to promise the inside front cover further screamed, "Your Reward For Opening These Pages Will Be Thrills, Chills And Strong Excitement!!"

(Continued Next Page)

Of Skywolf, Black Angel, Iron Ace and Bald Eagle---- companion heroes in the magazine, the reader was told:

"When you see them, They'll **SABOTAGE** and **DINAMITE** your Dull Moments!!"

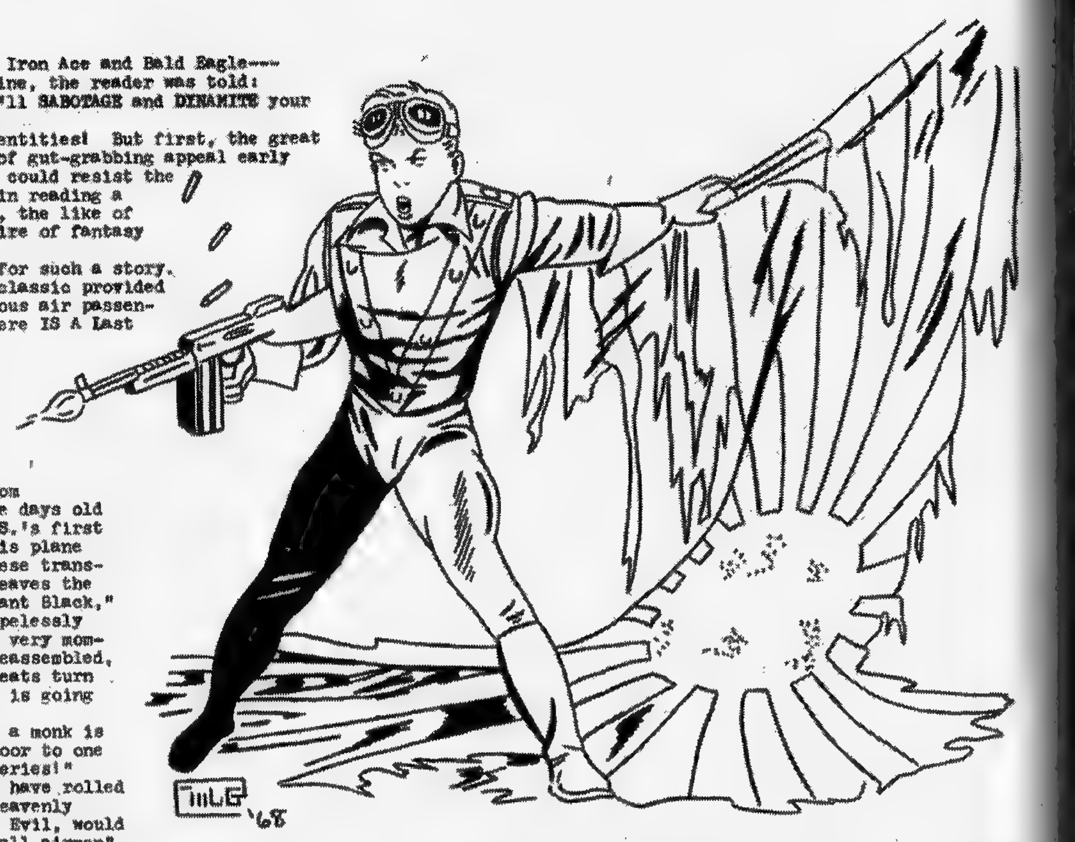
"Tell Others of their Identities! But first, the great **AIRBOY**!!" This was the kind of gut-grabbing appeal early comic books offered. And who could resist the temptation to immediately begin reading a tale of vengance and vendetta, the like of which tempers heroes in the fire of fantasy and wish fullfillment.

A prologue is necessary for such a story. And the writer of this comic classic provided one. Where do fliers and famous air passengers go after death? "Yes There IS A Last Landing Field!!"

Gathered together in this limbo of the air-lost are Amelia Earhart, Billy Mitchell, Wily Post, The Wright Brothers and the newly arrived Colin P. Kelly. (Kelly, a 26-year-old West Pointer, when World War II from America's standpoint was three days old (Dec. 10, 1941) became the U.S.'s first hero of the war by crashing his plane deliberately into a big Japanese transport ship.) Amelia Earhart leaves the group to return with "Lieutenant Black," an American ace, who being hopelessly outnumbered, has been at this very moment shot down by the Japs. Reassembled, the group of America's air-greats turn their attention to watch what is going on below on earth - where:

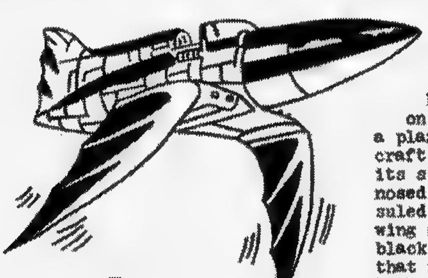
"Why at this very moment a monk is on the verge of opening the door to one of Aviation's greatest discoveries!"

Indeed the thunder might have rolled and lightning crackled with heavenly fury for as Misery, master of Evil, would know later, "the GREATEST of all airmen" would soon be claiming the skies as his own.



The setting was simple enough---a California monastery known as Capistrano. Certainly, the main characters were unassuming in the light of what destiny held. A tonsured, brown-robed monk called Padre Martier. With him, a blond-haired boy with a pleasant, enough sounding name---that of Davy. A quiet-spoken pair, this boy, Davy, and the old priest. Davy is an orphan and Padre Martier is like a father to him. Both have the deepest respect for one another and likewise both share the deepest dream of all, man's domination over air. Capistrano, famed for its swallows; but it is not swift birds of blue hue, the two watch in envious awe. It is only the mamal capable of true flight that are studied by the monk and the boy.

"Look at those bats, Davy, darting, diving, and landing on a matchstick---Why can't a man be able to do that with his airplane?" And the orphan boy listens, as Brother Martier continues: "Many years ago a man named Cellini had the secret. Wings that flapped like a birds! Surely nature is the best authority on flight!"


The Birdplane

Brother Martier's dreams are not idle fancy. For he and the boy dream further on, over the model of a plane. A strange craft this plane. From its streamlined bullet-nosed, cartridged, capsuled shaped body, pinon wing of scarlet with black ribbing. Wings that flow from tip to back in the scallped wing structure of a bat's wing. The monk and the boy are equally impatient. A model can not soar heavenwards with human occupants. The real thing is needed and Brother Martier makes his decision. To secure working capital, he will mortgage the monastery lands, of which he owns almost half, to Lress Sessler.

That Sessler has long coveted Capistrano as the "Choicest bit of property on the West Coast," is well known to the other monks. Warns Brother Cartwell of Sessler, "A Bad Man! He's Always Wanted This Land!!"

The warning goes unheaded. Sessler is quick to enter into loan agreements with Brother Martier. The plane is the wild imaginings of a "Mad Monk" and will never fly, thinks Sessler. On the eve of the scheduled flight, Sessler takes measures to make this so. The batwinged craft is unattended. A shadowy figure that is Sessler, drops a fine, powdery substance into the fuel tank. The plane stands alone awaiting the creator.

Morning, with Brother Martier at the controls. Spiraling toward the clouds in proud flight, is the strange plane. Suddenly, a stalled motor, swifter descent and...DEATH!

Sessler is the victor. Capistrano is his. Monks are driven from the monastery. And a boy, orphaned again, inspects the wreckage of what was once a shared dream. Then discovery, "Someone purposely clogged Padre's motor with sugar.

That the plane can fly, Davy has no doubt. In secret he works rebuilding the craft. It is on "Pop Johnson's" farm that the soon-to-be most formidable aircraft of all, is given new power of flight. And when repairs are at a completion, it is not an over-alled clad boy who climbs into the cockpit. It is a determined youth clad in a costume that is to become one of the most famous in comic book legends.

Goggles are set high on the forehead of this adolescent ace. The jacket he wears is one of red, a shortened modified version of the Surtout, famed fighting jacket of fighting Frenchmen of the 1800's. Buttoning at the left, the jacket is collared and across its front is a V-design of yellow. No doubt the V symbolized the internationally known war cry of the allies during World War II..."V.... For Victory!" Yellow epaulets and similarly-colored, flared, forearm-length gloves, complete the upper portion of the costume, save for a flowing scarf of Yale blue at the throat.

Tight fitting trousers of the same color as the scarf are bloused neatly into boots reaching to the upper calves. In early stories the boots are yellow in color, later they became brown. This was the garb of a new hero.

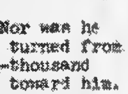
None of which the gloating Sessler knew. Nor was he aware as he surveyed with evil pride Capistrano turned from a haven of sancity into a gambling den, that ten-thousand pounds of avenging aircraft was winging its way toward him.

That Sessler was the "someone" who'd sabotaged Padre Martier's plane, the boy had no doubt. And it must have been with grimest satisfaction that he touched the bomb release lever to send explosives raining down on Capistrano, bringing death to Sessler, the murderer of the kindly padre.

Outside the monastery walls, the monks have watched it all. In wonderment they watch the departing batwinged craft. Retribution has been swift, final and deadly.

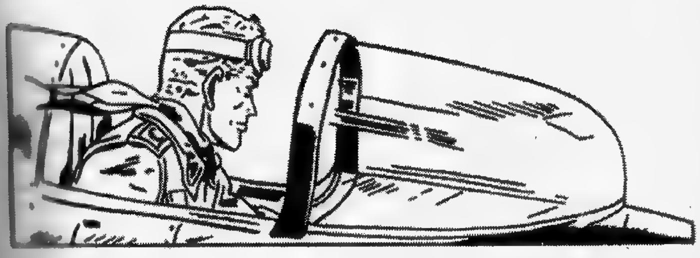
"Oh, It Was Truly An Act Of Heaven!" exclaims a monk, "Sessler's own sins caused his death!" The spoken question:

"But that plane! It was Martier's. Who? Who, could it be!"


Prof. Nelson

(*Note -- Airboy's story sounds so much better than the average origin story, of a hero of the Golden Age. It should. It was written by a master story teller, Charles Biro - creator of "Crime Buster", "Crime Does Not Pay" and "Daredevil and the Little Wise Guys".

It is not a known fact, but this writer and a friend, J. Randolph "Steed" Cox of Northfield, Minnesota sat with Charles Biro on the night of July 6, 196 and somehow the subject of Hillman magazines came up in the conversation.



"You know them?" Biro asked. "Sure" Cox and Fagan replied, "Airboy, Black Angel and all the rest." "Well," said Biro, "Cronin was editor at the time and he called me up and said, 'Charlie, we've got to have an idea and we've got to have it quick.' So we sat down and we started talking and we came up with Airboy and the old monk." "Martier was his name", said Cox. "That's right, and we sort of sat around and discussed it, and Cronin said, 'That's great Charlie,' and we had it", said Biro.

Looking at Fagan and Cox, Biro said, matter of factly, "All of this was confidential, I was asked to do a favor and I did it. It's so long ago now, it doesn't matter and there's no secret to it any more."

New writers took Biro's lead and more was added to the origin story.

There is more to the origin story. But this must wait. We're now 1942. There are facts about Airboy's origin that can only be answered in 1946 and 1947.

Was he really an orphan? Why was he called Airboy? Where did his costume come from? Had destiny actually shaped his course two centuries before? The faithful reader, who had followed Airboy from the first when his magazine was known as AIR FIGHTERS COMICS through the time the title logo was changed to read AIRBOY COMICS-FORMERLY AIR FIGHTERS COMICS and then shortened to AIRBOY COMICS--already know the answer to the first question.

Airboy Comics, Vol. 3, No. 10, December, 1946, revealed two things. The orphan boy, "Davy" was really Davy Nelson. He was the son of "Professor Nelson". For reasons of his own, the writer of this story brought about the reunion of father and son with little surprise on Airboy's part, other than a "Why! It's...YOU DAD!" as they meet in a darkened theatre where Airboy has been summoned.

Prof. Nelson explains, "Son, for a very good cause, I left you in a monastery, years ago, to be cared for by the monks!" Continuing Prof. Nelson tells how he, together with three other scientists had been afraid that their discoveries in jet propulsion, that would make super flight possible, might fall into wrong hands. The four agreed to separate and work in secret, knowing "If our knowledge were made public now, it might mean the end of civilization!" Thus the reason why, at the start of World War II, Airboy was at Capistrano with Brother Martier.

The remainder of this Nov.,1946, tale deals with the conniving of one of the four scientists, "Professor Fitzner," who plans to use the carefully guarded secrets "For Evil Purposes Of His Own!" Airboy is almost murdered by Fitzner's men, who take Prof. Nelson back to a secret island. Though hospitalized with four bullet wounds, Airboy is determined to find his father. With his head swathed in bandages, Airboy and Birdie near the island stronghold. Prof. Nelson has been shown a radiogram message, "Airboy murdered...Plane stolen..." Believing it his son's killer who is in the plane above, Prof. Nelson takes off in a jet plane of his own. Fitzner watches thinking smugly, "Hmm! There's only one person who could beat Airboy in an air battle...His Father! And I think he will!"

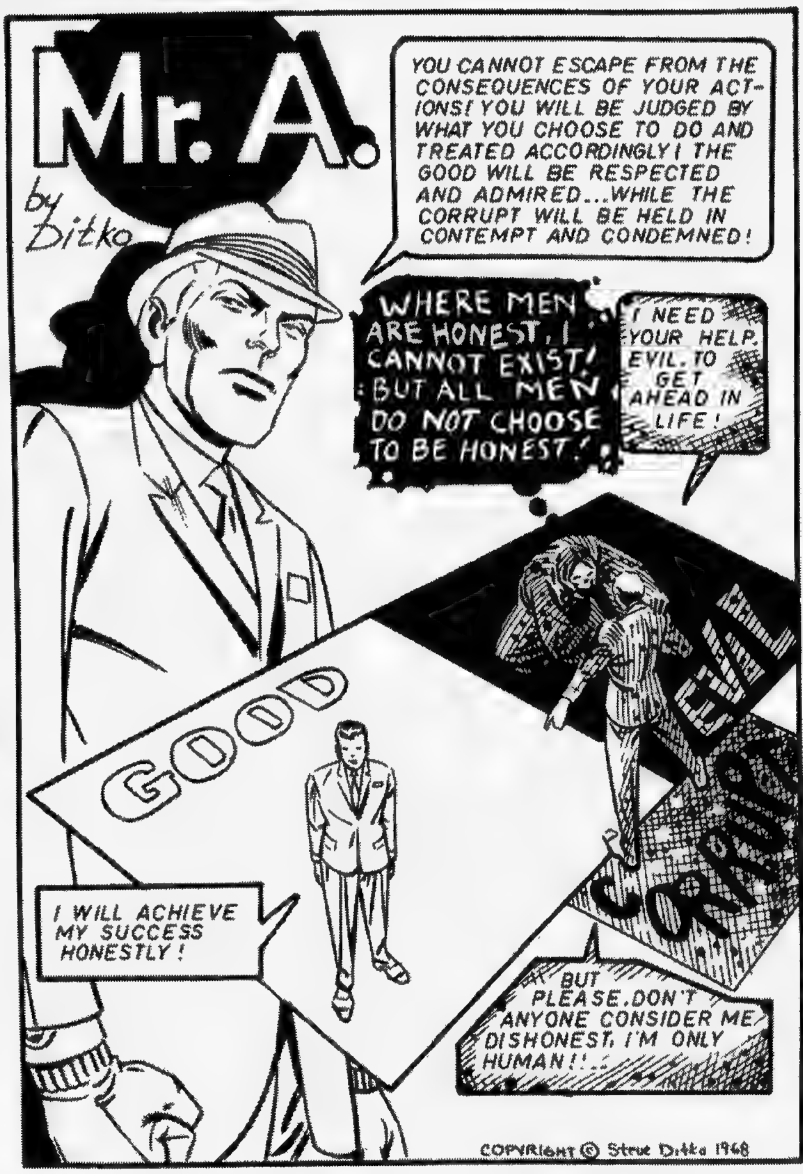
Above, the deadly duel continues, Prof. Nelson unknowingly shooting at his own sun. As a burst of gunfire rips away Airboy's head bandages, Prof. Nelson realizes who his opponent actually is. "I'm going, Fitzner! But you and your vicious plot will go with me!" cries Prof. Nelson now aware how he's been tricked by his fellow scientist. Deliberately, the professor aims the jet at the island building below.

"But Before The Ship Crashes...Airboy's Father Is Thrown From It!...The thatched roof of an adjoining building serves as a bruised, but safe, landing place for the father."

As Airboy lands, he shoots Fitzner!!! Airboy accomplishes this with a handgun stepping from Birdie, as he does so. Father and son are reunited for the story's happy conclusion.

NEXT ISSUE:

In Part 2, of this series, you'll learn more of Airboy's origin. You'll meet his deadly foes and hear, retold by Tom Fagan, of the greatest air battle in comics history. Be here! It's a must!!!


Mr. A.
by Ditko
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS! YOU WILL BE JUDGED BY WHAT YOU CHOOSE TO DO AND TREATED ACCORDINGLY! THE GOOD WILL BE RESPECTED AND ADMIRED...WHILE THE CORRUPT WILL BE HELD IN CONTEMPT AND CONDEMNED!
WHERE MEN ARE HONEST, I CANNOT EXIST! BUT ALL MEN DO NOT CHOOSE TO BE HONEST!
I NEED YOUR HELP, EVIL, TO GET AHEAD IN LIFE!
GOOD
EVIL
CORRUPT
I WILL ACHIEVE MY SUCCESS HONESTLY!
BUT PLEASE, DON'T ANYONE CONSIDER ME DISHONEST, I'M ONLY HUMAN!!
COPYRIGHT © Steve Ditko 1968

I have Mr. **Steve Ditko** to thank for bringing Mr. A to the pages of The Comic Crusader. Of the many characters Steve has illustrated, Mr. A stands as one of your editors favorites. Mr. A, for those of you unfortunate not to be familiar with him, is not a comic book character. He is a character created by Steve for Wally Wood's (fanzine?) Witzend. As you can see by the illo, he is a powerful, uncompromising character that believes that there are no grays in life, only black and white - good or evil. The character has appeared in issues [illegible] and 4 and is, to say the least, terrific. I believe back issues can be purchased at $1.00 each from Wally Wood, Box 882, Ansonia Station, New York, N.Y. 10023.

Thanks again for the illustration, Steve. It was darn nice of you. - MLG

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PROJECT:

JIM STERANKO'S CON SPEECH

NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. FILE

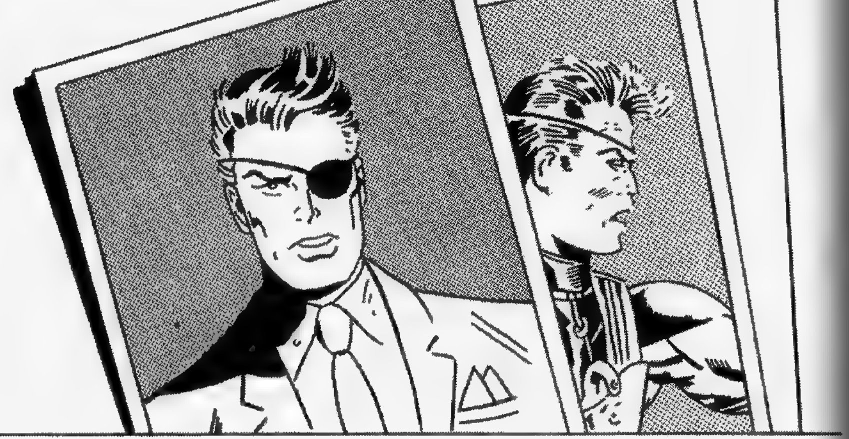
TOP SECRET...CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

DATE:
July 7, 1968

PLACE:
Statler Hilton
Hotel - New York

NOTES:
In an unprecedented fan conference, top Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., James Steranko, divulged to an audience of espionage experts, top secret information Re: Shield's Headquarters at 625 Madison Ave, New York.

REPORTING AGENTS:
Bob Cosgrove and
Martin L. Greim



As Martin mentioned last issue, one of the high points of the con (S.C.A.R.P. Con in New York.) was chatting with Jim Steranko, after Martin "bought" him in the auction held there. The bids were as high as fifty dollars in less than twenty seconds. Marty's bid was sixty-five dollars for an hour of Jim's time. Afterwards, Marty discovered that he had nothing for Jim to draw with, and a frantic search for a pencil ensued. I was kicking myself, because the previous year I had brought along some cray-pas, but had decided not to bring them this year because I hadn't had time to use them. However, I did have a sketchbook along, and MLG located a pencil. Thus, when we all had time to spare, we went up to Jim's room, conveniantly on the same floor as our own, sent for a few Cokes, and chatted while Jim weilded the pencils. Our conversation covered just about everything from comics to music, but the most enjoyable part was watching Jim sketch. Since both the merry one and myself are art-oriented, we naturally enjoy observing just how an artist proceeds with his work. I had wanted to ask Jim a bit more about his working methods, but time was limited and the conversation quickly shifted from comics to music, to many other topics, among which included Jim's new book. Jim spoke more about it at his speech, so...on to July 7th.

The next time I saw Jim, Marty and I met him in the hallway enterance, where he was sitting next to his exhibition of work behind the counter. This included a Shield cover for issue 6, and a few Talon pages. (Let us observe a moment of silent meditation in gratitude that the first real sword and sorcery strip in comics has escaped the CCA.) If you saw some of Jim's art in the Castle of Frankenstein write-up, let me assure you that you haven't seen anything 'till you see Steranko's Agent X in color. In addition to this, Jim had thrown in a splash page from the Future American strip rejected by Harvey Pub. (That's something else I wanted to ask Jim about--FA and the media he used for the Agent X art.) The younger fans (those under 68) ooed and aah'd as Jim dated the Nick Fury, he had just drawn for Marty. Jim said that it would probably be the last drawing of Fury that he was likely to do.

Then, Jim made his enterance to a short round of applause, and after an introduction by Carole Seuling, he began his speech on how to draw for the comics. He immediatly commented that he had his own way of doing it, which no one else would probably want to use, but proceeded to explain it nonetheless. Jolly Jim (whoops, that's Jolly JACK)..."Jaunty" Jim said that he first writes out a plot synopsis in longhand, and then writes a page by page breakdown, with one or two sentances describing the action on each page. Since Jim, as you know, puts a lot of work into his strip, he frequently has to delete certain sequences. Then comes the actual artwork--layouts, pencils, inks, and coloring. And speaking of coloring and inking, the first fan to ask a question, first complimented Jim on his color work and then wanted to know why he no longer did the inking work. JS replied that since he both writes and draws the SHIELD stories, it gets boring to rework the same assignment so many times, so he decided to drop one of the stages. Logically enough, the next question was if Jim wasn't inking his own work, who would he prefer to ink his pencils.

"Well", he replied, "if I had my choice, I'd pick either Joe Sinnot or Frank Giacoia. Joe's style is more like my own--very tight and precise--Frank is different--he gives my pencils a loose, free look. When I first came into this business, I thought I was a hotshot inker--now I think I'm weaker on inks." Having seen Jim's pencils, I would have to agree with him. While his inking is in someways more professional, his pencils seem to have an added dimension of depth to them. When Marty prints Jim's Fury drawing, check the way Jim draws the boots, then compare with the comic book art and I think you'll see what I mean. I should point out however, that most comic book artists ARE better pencillers than inkers. Al Williamson is one of the few who is the other way around. Frank McLaughlin of Charlton is another. Even in fandom, very few fan artists can ink worth a damn, as far as strip work goes, myself included. The editor of this magazine is one of the fandom exceptions. One thing Marty and I agree on tho', is that Jim is his own best inker, with Sinnot second.

Next came what I refer to as a "fun" question: does Jim have problems with the Comics Code? "Well now...remember the scene in Fury's pad where I had the captionless panels... stereo, roses, etc. Yeah? OK, remember the panel with the telephone? A lot of you probably wondered how the hell a telephone fit in! Some thought the phone was ringing, some thought Fury had a call from SHIELD, a couple of people worked out tremendous symbolic meanings! They were all wrong. Originally, I had the phone off the hook--but the code objected and they didn't have time to call me, so Johnny Romita put the phone BACK on the hook."

While the crowd was digesting this tidbit of information, someone asked the Marvel artist what he would have put in instead of the phone: "Oh, I dunno. There are lots of symbols you can use to convey solitude and softness. I don't know what they didn't like about the telephone, really. Evidentally, they felt it appealed to the purient interests of the reader. Our instructions from the Comics Code read like this...Page 6 - Panel 1 -- Delete cleavage. Page 6 particularly disturbs us, as it may

violate provision: "Illicit sex relations are neither to be hinted at or portrayed." Nothing indicates that the girl is Nick's wife, and therefore it must be assumed she is his girl. Suggest that this be softened by putting phone back on the hook and last scene be changed to eliminate the embrace. They said the kiddies searched the magazines for dirty things like that--I began to wonder, 'Just what kind of ten year olds have we GOT HERE anyhow.' Now, everytime I walk by a phone booth I get horny."

"Although---they must be easing up lately--have you seen the Scorpio story---when it's the morning after in Val's apartment? Solly Brodsky almost flipped when he saw that. I never thought we'd get it thru. And the other part too--where Fury says to the Pickman "I can't get SHIELD involved cause it's illegal. You gotta do it for me." I think the code is getting more realistic about these things, but I'll keep pushing to get more adult ideas thru." Then realizing how he sounded, the irrepressible Mr. Steranko added whimsically--"They'll keep Val's cleavage out every damn time though!"

"Now that you aren't doing Fury, what are your future plans?", questioned someone from the audience.

Many of you have asked who's idea it was to take me off of Nick Fury---it wasn't Stan's--it was mine. I was getting tired of it and wanted to try something new. I'm working on a black and white, sword and sorcery book, and I'm also writing a book on comics. I don't plan on doing this forever. I'd like to do paperback cover paintings--less work, more pay."

Question: "Talon won't be as crummy as Spiderman, will he?"

"Well, I think one of the problems with the Spiderman book was that it was drawn just like a four color comicbook, with the greys thrown in afterward. Talon will be designed to utilize the potential advantages of the black and white medium. Yes?"

"Mr. Steranko, I've heard you color your own strip and I want to say that if this is so, you really do a fine job"

"Thanks, but often my coloring and the work you see printed aren't at all similar. Take for example, the "Hell Hound of Ravenlock" story--on the first page--the one where everything was done in red? They came up with an oval moon--an OVAL MOON! I never would have believed it--they must be paid to louse things up. Marvel has had coloring and printing problems, I'll admit, but they're in the process of changing printers. You'll see! DC usually has bright, [illegible] covers for example. Incidentally, Bill Everett did the coloring for the first Silver Surfer book, and I think he did a fine job."

"I didn't like the way you put Fury in a super-hero suit."

"Well, I tried to make everything in the strip functional. It was ridiculous for him to get into these fantastic situations looking like a bum in a wrinkled business suit, although a lot of people disagree. You'll note I drew the mole machine in that four-page spread so it would really work--usually you see some sort of corkskrew thing. That's why I dumped Jasper Sitwell--Stan wanted me to use him, and the readers liked him, but I just couldn't--I mean, no idiot like that is a secret agent--so they stuck him in Iron Man instead. When I originally introduced Clay Quatermain, the Gaff, and Val, my original idea was that each issue a different one of them would go out on an adventure with Fury. I changed my mind about that and found another use for Val."

"One thing I didn't like about you on SHIELD was that you seemed to be turning everything into little genre stories, at least towards the end. Was that your intention?"

"Absolutely! I wanted each episode to be a unique, individual adventure. I looked at what the rest of the Marvel books were like--and one of the things I didn't like about them was they all had a beginning, a middle...and a middle. I wanted to see something that you could read without being frustrated at the end. The Centurius story, for instance, would have been told better over two issues."

Jim also showed how he draws Nick Fury. For details, see the supplementry article below. Now, back for the question wrap-up:

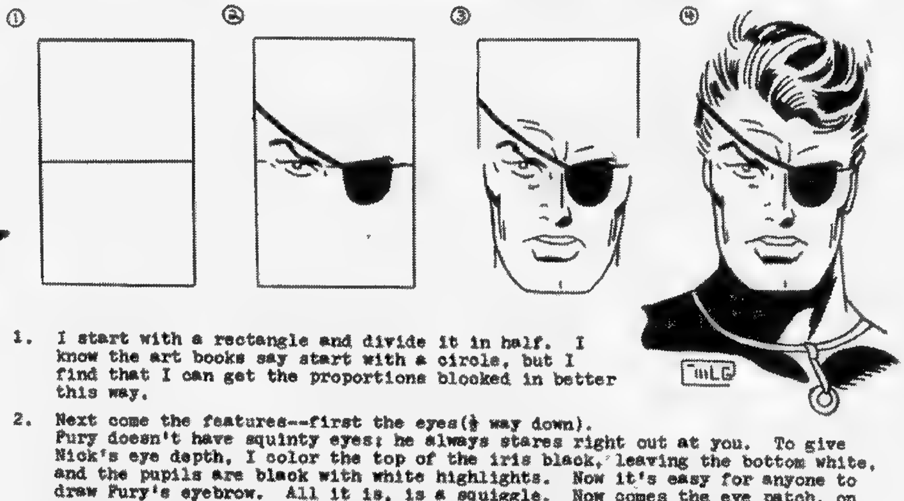
"What Marvel character would you most like to do?"

"Captain America. Even tho' he's sort of a straight, square character, he's been a favorite of mine ever since I read him as a kid. I asked Stan for that strip, and almost got to do it too. But I'll tell you what happened. Jack Kirby's daughter, Lisa was watching the Marvel superhero show on television and she saw Jack's name on the credits. So she said 'Daddy, how come you don't draw Captain America any more?' This got Jack thinking and he decided to pick it up again. Jack is the King and I'd almost rather read his version then draw it myself."

And with the applause from that statement still ringing in our ears, we can close on the happy note that Marvel's greatest new talent now does draw CAPTAIN AMERICA.

(Your editor would like to thank Jim Steranko for the photos of himself, used in this article. The 1st photo shows the way Jim looks today the others were taken a few years back. On the following page is the Fury drawing Jim did for me at the SCARP Con.)

HOW I DRAW NICK FURY



1. I start with a rectangle and divide it in half. I know the art books say start with a circle, but I find that I can get the proportions blocked in better this way.
2. Next come the features--first the eyes(½ way down). Fury doesn't have squinty eyes; he always stares right out at you. To give Nick's eye depth, I color the top of the iris black, leaving the bottom white, and the pupils are black with white highlights. Now it's easy for anyone to draw Fury's eyebrow. All it is, is a squiggle. Now comes the eye patch, on his left eye. When I first started drawing Fury, I used to draw the eyebrow above it, where it belongs, but it looked ridiculous. Fans used to ask, "What's that hairy thing?"--so I used artistic liscence, and now leave it out or only show part of it.
3. The nose is standard, with the nostrils flaring out. The mouth is easy to draw. It's just like a bow--next, the shadow under the lips and the tapering of the jaw line.
4. Now--the ears. The hair is next, for the final touch. Hair is one thing that seperates the men from the boys--you can tell a lot about an artist by the way he draws hair--it's difficult to get that loose free look. Well, there he is--NICK FURY.

Text adapted from Jim Steranko's SCARP Con speech by...Bob Cosgrove
Art re-creations by...Martin Greim

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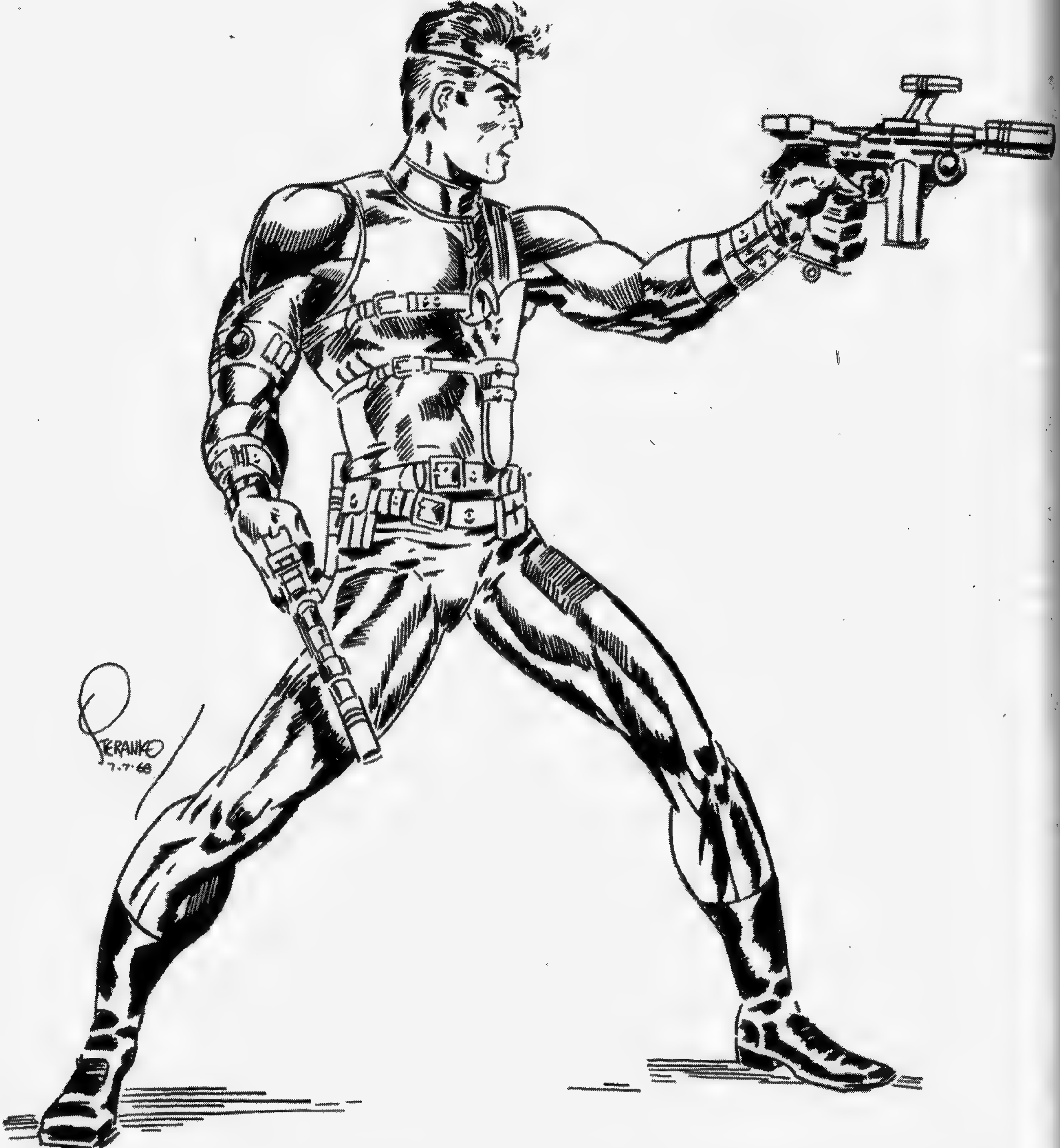
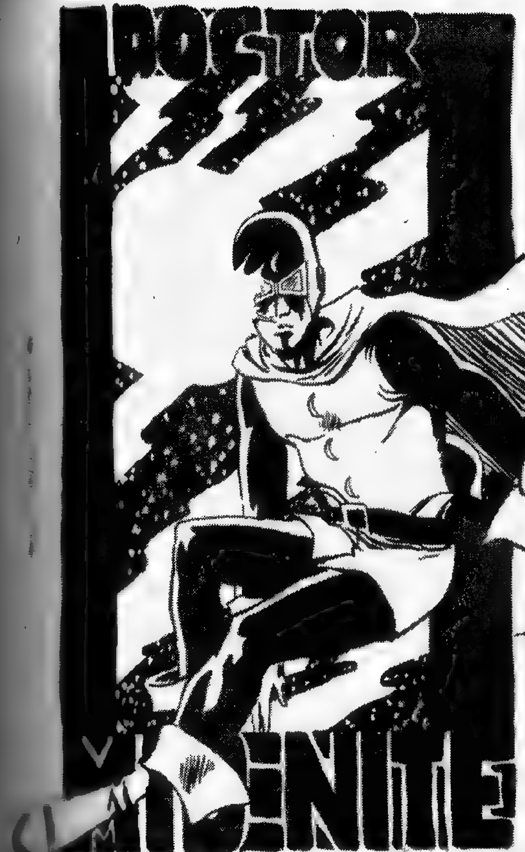

Steranko
7-7-'68

NICK FURY



that amazing master
Steve Fritz

I am pleased, this issue, to feature fan - STEVE FRITZ in the amateur CONtributor. Steve's work has appeared in a number of fanzines and I'm honored to have it in mine.

I met Steve in New York, this past summer, with Rich Buckler and managed to get the interview with him.

M.G. How did you get into fandom, Steve?

S.F. I got into fanzines by sending out a single sheet of my work to as many fanzine editors as I could think of. I got back one answer, from Steve Parente. He said, "I like your work. Send some more samples". In the meantime though, I started my own fanzine - Amazing Masters. (Ed Note - A ditto zine - hence the Masters title.) Since then I've gotten a lot of requests for art, but lately I've had to refuse them because I get so bogged down.

M.G. What are you active at right now?

S.F. Like Rich Buckler, I'm trying to break into the Pro field.

M.G. Do you do any writing?

S.F. I don't do much writing because I don't consider myself a writer. Every once in a while though, I get a big kick out of writing a caption here or dialogue there - but nothing terrific.

M.G. Who's your favorite artist?

S.F. I consider all my favorite artists on the same level or plane. Those artists include Kirby, Frazetta, Crandall, Williamson - all the really top pros. After all, why shouldn't I like 'em - I steal from all of them.

M.G. What's your favorite comic magazine?

S.F. The Fantastic Four, but my favorite hero is Thor. I like the idea of this hulking character being able to swing a hammer so fast, throw it, and then hang onto it and fly. I like it better than Captain America's shield. The reason I like The Fantastic Four magazine better, is because I like the way it's written. Thor has too many words per page. You know - all those Thees and Thous.

M.G. Which would you prefer to work in, Comic Books or Comic Strips?

S.F. I would like to work in comic books because I feel they have just as much potential as the comic strips.

M.G. What's your favorite ama-super hero?

S.F. Ama-heroes never really turned me on; but I suppose Rich Buckler's "Ghost" character is the one I like best. I liked the way it was handled.

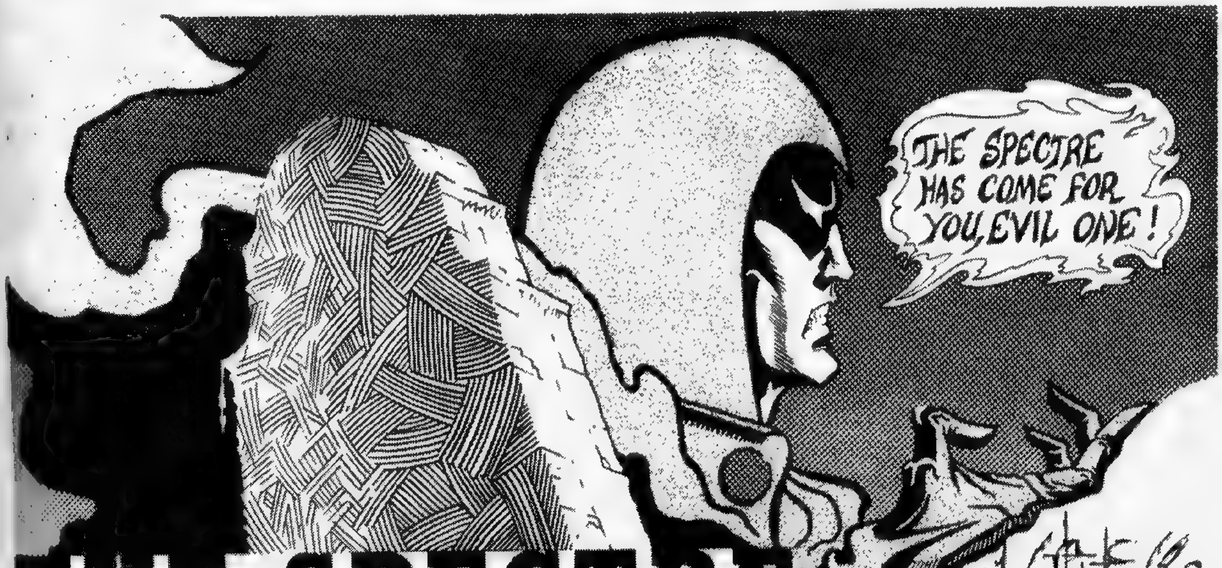
At this point, Steve recounted how he published his first fanzine. Back when he lived in Indiana, Steve's friend Mike Redman wanted him to help publish a fanzine with him. Steve told him that he didn't think he was ready to break into fandom yet, as he thought his art wasn't good enough. However, after Steve moved to Georgia and started at a new school, he found he had the use of a ditto machine at the school and unlimited free paper. He called Mike and asked him if he was ready to publish that fanzine they had talked about. The result was Amazing Masters #1. Steve said, looking back on that first issue, "I wasn't really ready to enter fandom, but I'm glad I got into the work.

Steve's other interests include reading science fiction and studying camera work in the movies. He likes the way movie credits are done and would like to run a comic the way they do in the movies - with prologue and epilogue.

Steve has recently sent me an 8 page art portfolio called "ARTIST". It has some real nice work in it, though it's only a one shot. Why not send 25¢ to:

STEVE FRITZ
1472 Button Gwinnett Rd.
Norcross, Georgia.
30071.

I'm sure you, like myself, will enjoy the art. Especially since it has quite a bit of art by that Amazing Master - STEVE FRITZ.


THE SPECTRE HAS COME FOR YOU, EVIL ONE!
THE SPECTRE

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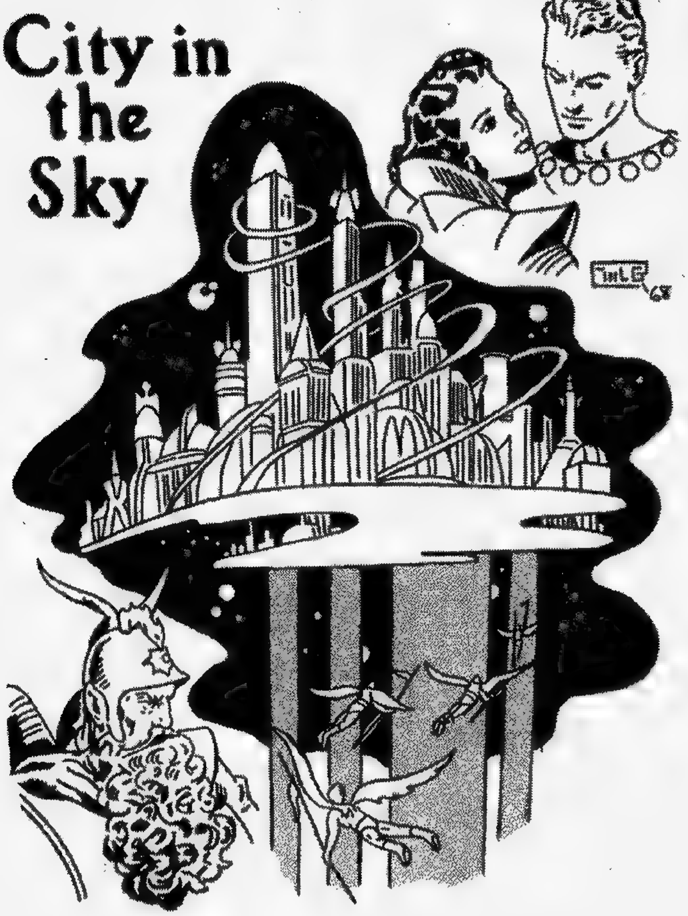
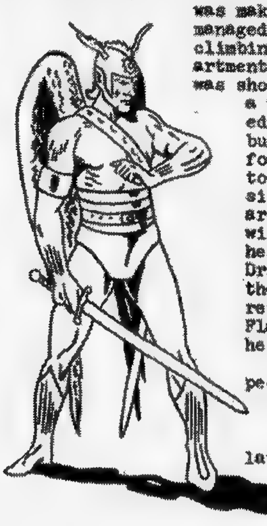
City in the Sky



Of all the many Kingdoms, on the planet Mongo, the fantastic aerial city of the Hawkmen is, in my opinion, the most unique.

This city was suspended in the air, over the magnetic mountains, by powerful rays controled from deep within the city. This sky city was peopled by beings with wings and ruled over by King Vultan. It is surprising how many early D.C. Hawkman stories contained swipes from the Alex Raymond Hawkmen series. Of all the ideas Raymond created, Sky City is the most original and unique.

Flash Gordon was first introduced to this kingdom, when he, Dale Arden, Dr. Zarkov, Prince Barin and Tun, of the Lion Men, were captured by the winged wariors of this city in the sky. They were brought before King Vultan who impressed them into slavery and kept Dale Arden as part of his harem. However, Flash would not be kept a slave and after many battles, in the aerial kingdom, he succeeded in freeing Dale and his friends; and earning the respect of King Vultan and his people.



This came about when Flash rescued Dale from Vultan, who was making advances towards her. They managed to elude the pursuing Hawkmen by climbing down a makeshift rope to an apartment just below them. But their freedom was short-lived, for after climbing through a window, they were quickly surrounded by Hawkmen guards. Flash attacked, but was quickly overcome and put before a firing squad. Just as he was to be shot, the city lurched to one side and buildings began to crumble around them. Something had gone wrong with the support ray machines, that held the city aloft. At this point Dr. Zarkov and Prince Barin came upon the scene. Zarkov thought he could repair the damaged machines and after Flash had bargained for their release, he proceeded to do so.

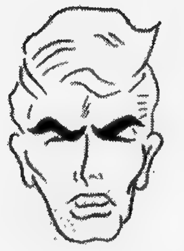
Afterwards, King Vultan and his people became allies of Flash in his battle to overthrow Ming the Merciless.

The whole Hawkmen story is related in the Big Little Book - "Flash Gordon and the Monsters of Mongo!" It's a reading must!

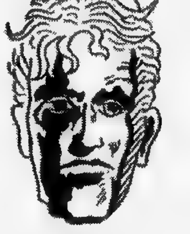
FANDOM'S FINEST

by

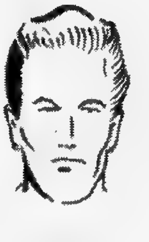
Bob Cosgrove



Schelly



Harrer



Buckler

THE IMMORTAL CORPSE

With the conclusion of MLG's "First Inhumans" hit the merry one decided he would like me to write a series of articles on Fandom's hero creations. Before I talk about that, let me give you some little-known info on "FI": Before MLG decided to publish a companion mag to CHAMPION, he informed me that he wanted to do an article on "Cosmo Cat." I could have seen the Disney animals, or even maybe Atomic Mouse, but I thought he had to be kidding with "Cosmo Cat." At any rate, shortly afterwards this mag came into being, and "Cosmo Cat" led off the most widely acclaimed column since Graphic Story Review. My reaction to this type of article was similar. I hope I'm wrong again. If I am, this will be expanded to a larger size. Now that that's out of the way, on to this issue's victim, THE IMMORTAL CORPSE.

The Immortal Corpse was originally - Jon Walker, who wrote criminal expose letters to local newspapers. However, before he exposed the chief ganglord, the underworld learned of his identity and shot him. Unfortunatly, since they lacked amunition, they used radium capsules, which, in addition to chemicals splattered over him, gave him a new life. When he came to, the "first Deadman" found that he could alter his age at will, thus becoming an "Immortal Corpse."

The first Immortal Corpse story I read was written by Rick Jones and drawn by Bill Schelly, his creator. The story was rather stereotype--demon from the past trys to destroy world, with hero saving day. The art was poorly done, an indication that a fine idea can be poorly executed.

The next Corpse story appeared in BOMBSHELL #9, with art and script credits going to Ron Horton, altho' it looks as tho' Schelly had a hand in the art. (Probably he mastered it.) It was called "The Torrent," and was probably the finest of the three Bombshell jobs. The story, a two page text, dealt with the Corpse's efforts in stopping a narcotics smuggler. There was no real complicated plot, and the story was somewhat over-written, seemingly influenced by Ray Bradbury. Still, it was a good job.

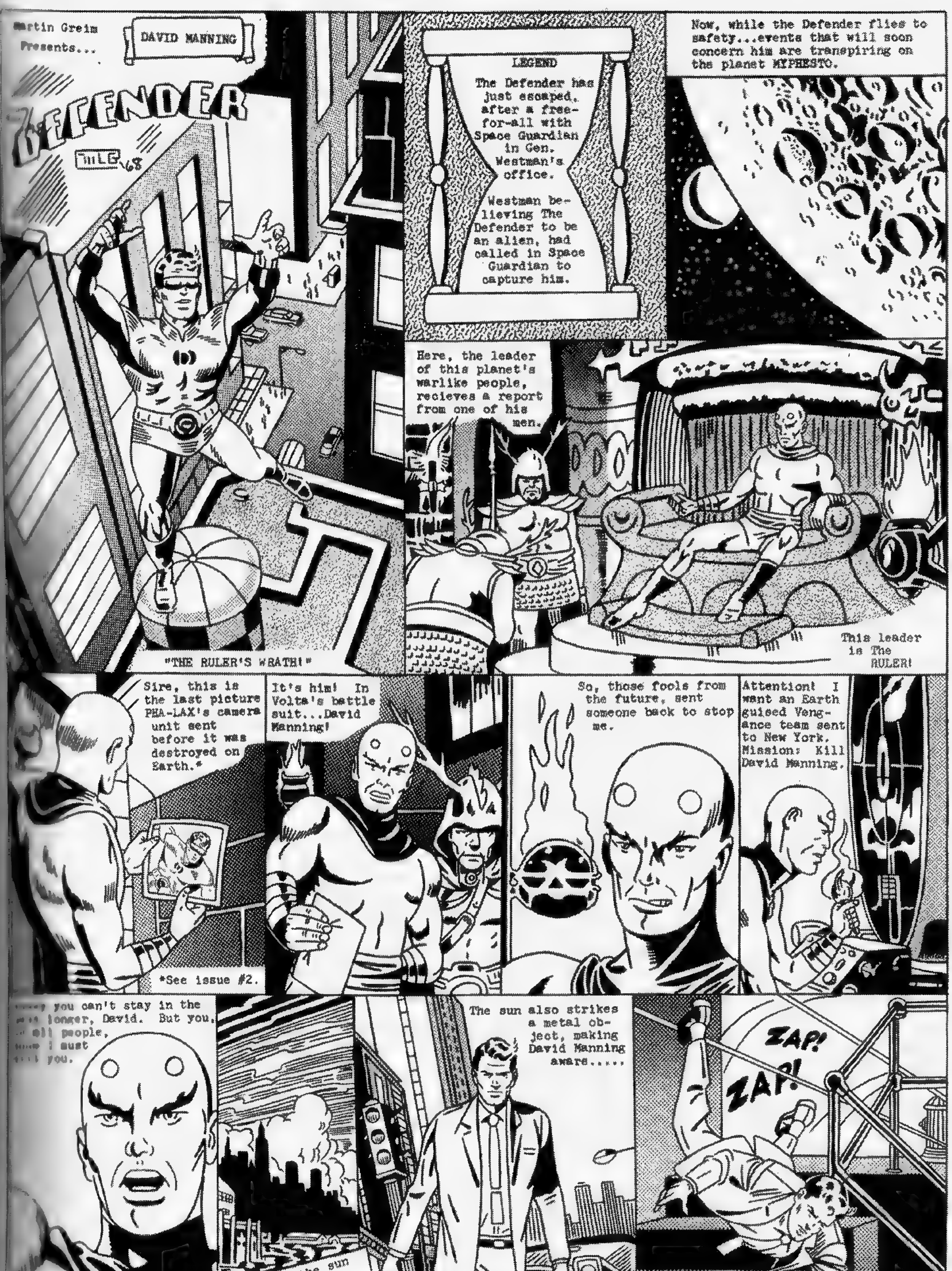
"The Bells of Hamnet's Hill," was the script-art creation of Dave Harrer, and appeared in Bombshell #10. The seven-pager was well written, but not exceptional. The art, the finest the character enjoyed (storywise), was good, altho' Dave has done better. Two other artists, Alan Hutchinson and Rich Buckler, both did fine spot illos of the Corpse, Alan's a back cover and Rich's an ad.

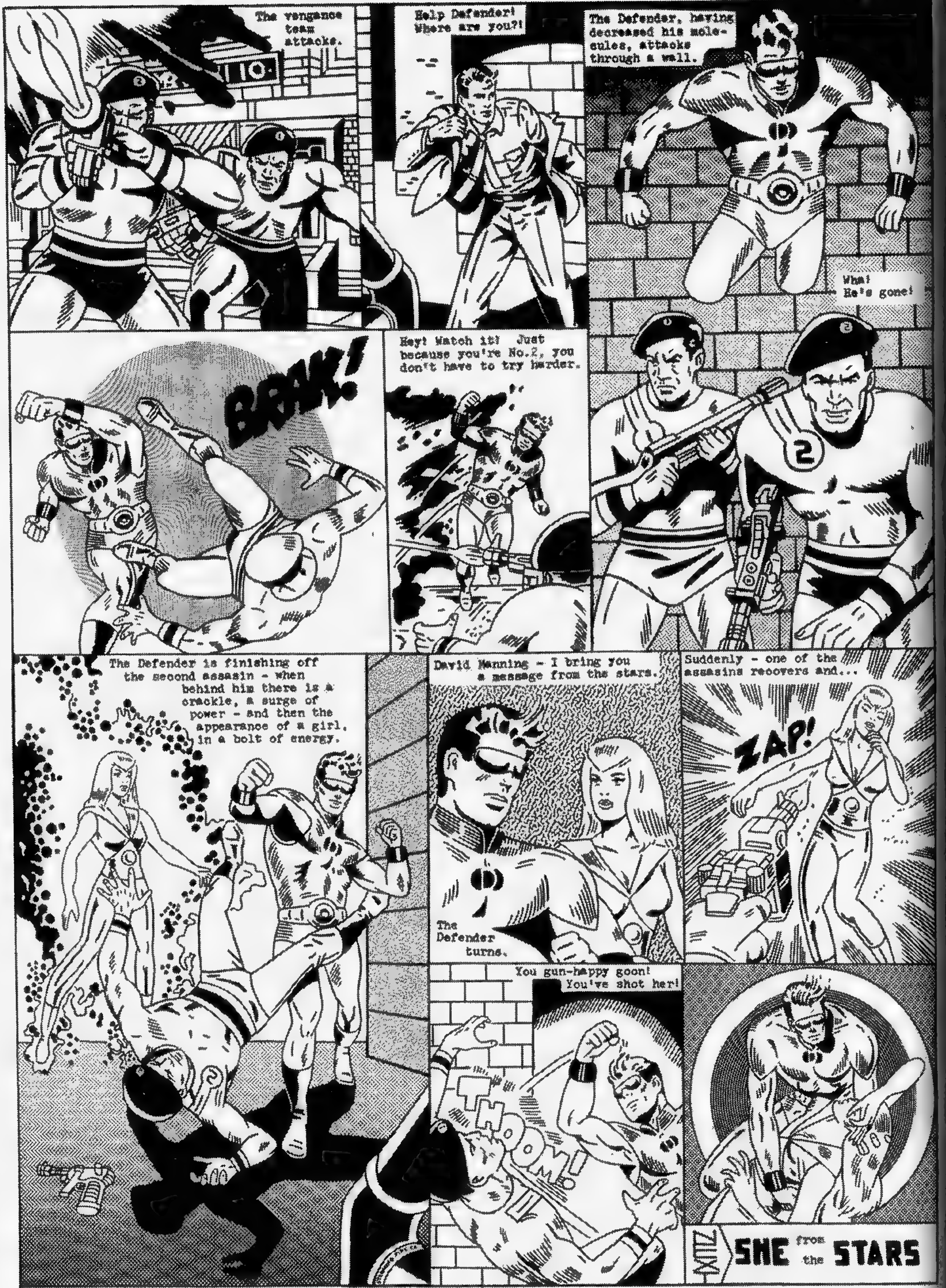
Intrigued by the Corpse, I set about writing and drawing a Corpse STRIP, 17 pages in length. I did not 'ink' the masters, and the strip has not yet seen print. I felt that one of the Corpse's strong points was the visual effects possible in his aging. None of the text artists attempted it, and indeed the text discouraged it. So, in a sequence where The Immortal Corpse met the Cat of Egypt, to combat a vampire, I tried it. I don't like to compare my efforts with other artists, but insofar as my own efforts go, it was by far the best ditto job I did for Bombshell, altho' I think my art has improved since then. The story was, in my opinion, good, altho' not nearly as good as the second one I planned. Unfortunatly, my dislike of ditto and lack of time preclude further attempts on my part. As for the Corpse, his future remains an enigma.

(Editor's Note: If you have a particular ama-hero you'ld like to see reviewed, or if you have a ama-hero of your own, that has seen print - send your requests or issue your hero has appeared in to:

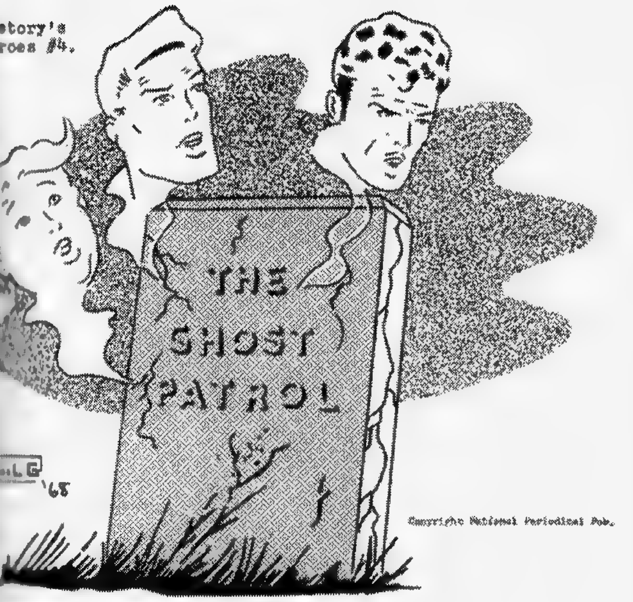
Bob Cosgrove
58 Massachusetts Ave
Braintree, Mass. 02185

and perhaps he will soon review it soon, in this column.)


Martin Greim Presents...
DAVID MANNING
The DEFENDER
"THE RULER'S WRATH!"
LEGEND
The Defender has just escaped, after a free-for-all with Space Guardian in Gen. Westman's office.
Westman believing The Defender to be an alien, had called in Space Guardian to capture him.
Now, while the Defender flies to safety...events that will soon concern him are transpiring on the planet MYPHESTO.
Here, the leader of this planet's warlike people, recieves a report from one of his men.
This leader is The RULER!
Sire, this is the last picture PHA-LAX's camera unit sent before it was destroyed on Earth.*
*See issue #2.
It's him! In Volta's battle suit...David Manning!
So, those fools from the future, sent someone back to stop me.
Attention! I want an Earth guised Vengeance team sent to New York. Mission: Kill David Manning.
you can't stay in the longer, David. But you, all people, I must you.
Slowly the sun rises over Manhattan.
The sun also strikes a metal object, making David Manning aware.....
ZAP! ZAP!
THAT DEATH IS NEAR!


The vengance team attacks.
Help Defender! Where are you?!
The Defender, having decreased his molecules, attacks through a wall.
Wha! He's gone!
BRAK!
Hey! Watch it! Just because you're No.2, you don't have to try harder.
2
The Defender is finishing off the second assasin - when behind him there is a crackle, a surge of power - and then the appearance of a girl, in a bolt of energy.
David Manning - I bring you a message from the stars.
The Defender turns.
Suddenly - one of the assasins recovers and...
ZAP!
You gun-happy goon! You've shot her!
THOOM!
SHE from the STARS

History's
Heroes #4.



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by

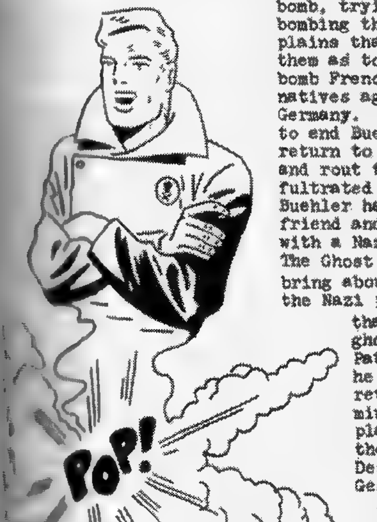
Martin L. Greim and John Lawrence

The three gentlemen floating out at you from the gravestone above are, from left to right, Slim, Fred and Pedro, of the Ghost Patrol. The Ghost Patrol first came into being in 1942, in the May issue of Flash Comics, #29.

It was told, in this issue, that behind the smashing of the German occupation in French Africa is a strange story... If you do not believe in Ghosts Don't Read It! For you will call it poppy-cock...but if you do believe in ghosts, you will easily understand what happened on the burning sands of the desert...Where men of all Nations fought under the same flag of the Foreign Legion!

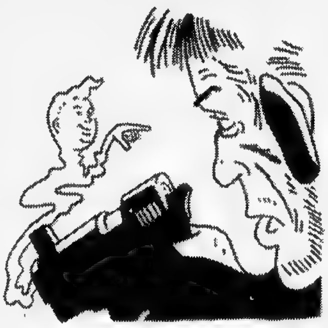
Outside a sun-bleached hangar of the Foreign Legion, voices are heard in a heated argument. It is Captain Buehler telling three pilots that for one thousand dollars a week they must follow orders and bomb the natives. The three pilots agree, but wonder why paid flying instructors bomb villages on orders from a German. After a brief discussion, they decide to drop the bombs on the desert. As the three angry men walk to their plane, Henri, their youthful mechanic, tries to warn them that to go up, is to die. Thinking Henri is a young pacifist, they take off. In the air, Slim finds a note from Henri, warning that there's a time bomb aboard the plane. He reads the warning to late...In the next instant, the plane explodes!

Morning rises and so do each of the three men. They find they can see thru each other and then come across their own graves. The trio then realizes that they're dead and must be ghosts. "Maybe we're getting a chance to undo some of the harm we've already done", says Fred. Just then, Henri comes on the scene and the Ghost Patrol finds it was he that planted the bomb, trying to stop them from bombing the natives. Henri explains that the Nazis are using them as tools...tools that will bomb French Africa and turn the natives against France and towards Germany. The Ghost Patrol decides to end Buehler's scheme. They return to the Foreign Legion post and rout the Nazis that have infultrated there. However, Capt. Buehler has kidnaped Henri's girlfriend and is escaping in a plane with a Nazi squadron as an escort. The Ghost Patrol materialize and bring about the destruction of the Nazi planes. Buehler screams that he doesn't believe in ghosts, but when the Ghost Patrol appears in his plane he faints. Henri's girl is returned to him and a few minutes later...Buehler's plane rises, piloted by the invisible Ghost Patrol. Destination? The Nazi Gestapo Headquarters... Passengers?...only one... Buehler, who is destined to be dosed with his own medicine, by his own countrymen! The sun glints off the plane's shiny surface and the light plays tricks with the ship, making its nose resemble a skull. Perhaps the sun realizes that it has touched the Ghost Patrol...



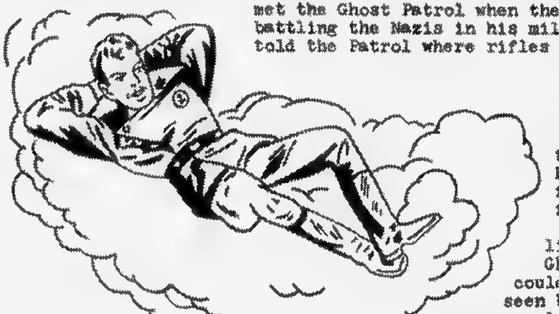
The artist for this first story was Frank Harry and he continued to do the Ghost Patrol until 1947. Though the Patrol was never really blessed with great art, it did have its moments. Carmine Infantino did a few stories from 1947 to 1948.

With issue #30, the Ghost Patrol saga begun in issue #29 continued. Capt. Buehler was returned to Germany, by the Ghost Patrol and sent at once to Hitler in Berlin. The Patrol appeared in Hitler's office and forced his guards to shoot at him. The Patrol tried forcing Hitler to call off his invasion of England, but while in their solid state, they were struck from behind. When they regained consciousness, they proved no prison could hold a ghost. They walked through the prison walls and created havoc among the prison guards. The Patrol then caught up with Buehler again, aboard a tugboat that was towing huge barges, of heavily armed Nazis towards England. After disposing of Buehler, The Ghost Patrol went about with axes and began cutting the barges free from the tugboat. A British warship soon came on the scene and captured the now helpless Nazis.



In issue #35, The Ghost Patrol fought Nazism in Spain and came up against Colonel Jaime, who planned to kill all his political prisoners. The signal for the killing was the death of a bull in the local arena. The Ghost Patrol turned the tables on him by saving the bull and setting all the prisoners free.

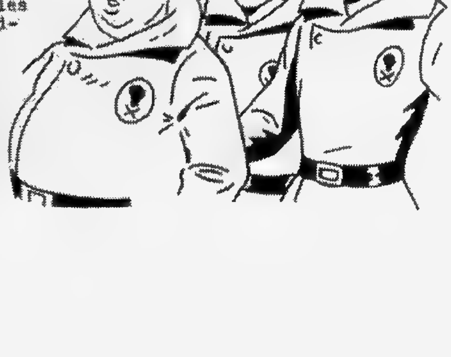
The Ghost Patrol met another ghost for the first time, in issue #42. Old Bazin the miller was shot by Gauleiter Vogel of the Gestapo. After Vogel left, Bazin's ghost appeared and swore he would remain with the people of Holland until they were free of the accursed Nazis. Bazin met the Ghost Patrol when they were battling the Nazis in his mill. Bazin told the Patrol where rifles and ammunition were hidded in his mill, so they could turn them over to Holland's freedom fighters. (Bazin, unlike The Ghost Patrol, could not be seen by living people.) The weapons were turned over to the Guerillas and the Ghost Patrol aided them in defeating the Germans. Bazin could now find rest in the soil of his beloved country.



Patriotism was a byword in the early Ghost Patrol stories. In issue #53, The Ghost Patrol helped the war time paper drive, while at the same time, uncovering a robbers den, in an old rooming house.

With issue #52, The Ghost Patrol departed from fighting the Axis powers and fought another type of tyrant. On an island off the coast of South America the Patrol met Eric, a fat man resembling the Devil and his evil partner Kathe. These two fiends were keeping hundreds of slaves helpless, in their underground city, by putting a chemical known as Lethe in their drinking water. Kathe had captured Slim and brought him to Eric's city. There, after drinking some Lethe, he became a slave. Fred was captured too, when he and Pedro tried to rescue him. Finally, Pedro saved the day, by releasing pure water into the slave-pen's drinking water. The Patrol and the now freed slaves, chased Eric and Kathe into a cave, which Eric blew up when Pedro knocked a grenade from his hand. Thus ending his evil dictatorship.

With the war over The Patrol began fighting criminals and for a time, their stories bordered on the ridiculous. (Like those of Johnny Thunder.) However, towards the end of thier careers, the stories improved and they remained a feature 'till Flash Comics folded, in 1949.



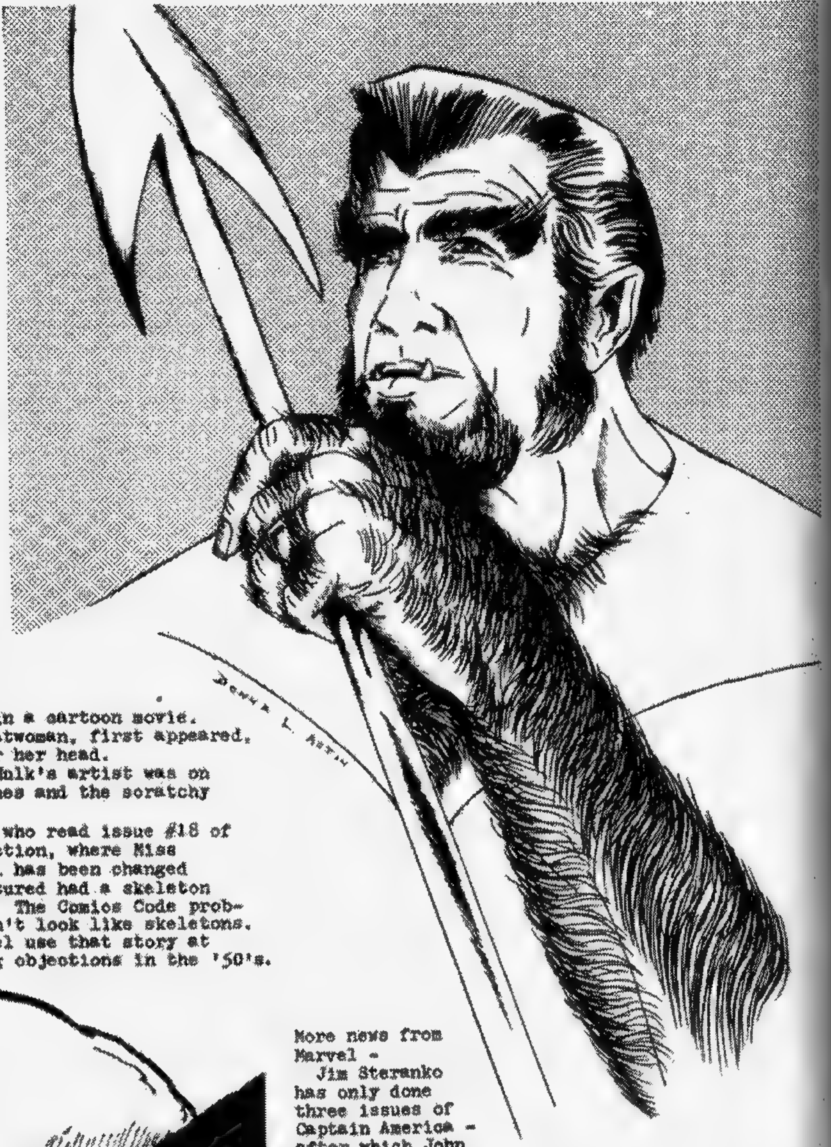
COMIC CHATTER

Well here we are again - the portion of The Comic Crusader where we just shoot the breeze about comics and related material. Well what'll we talk about this issue?

How about Star Trek, for openers. Have you fans seen the new Klingon Battle Cruiser model from the Star Trek show yet? It's put out by AMT and costs $2.50. Like the Enterprise model, it's equipped with lights and all the other things that made that model great. For all you Star Trek fans, it's a must.

Also for Star Trek fans - there's a new paperback book out called, "The Making of Star Trek". This book gives tons of info on the show and has photos of all the equipment they use on the show - phasers, tricorders, communicators and the like. It also has photos of the cast and shows the special effects used on the show. It's an excellent buy for 95¢ from..Ballantine Books

101 Fifth Ave.
New York, N.Y.
10003.

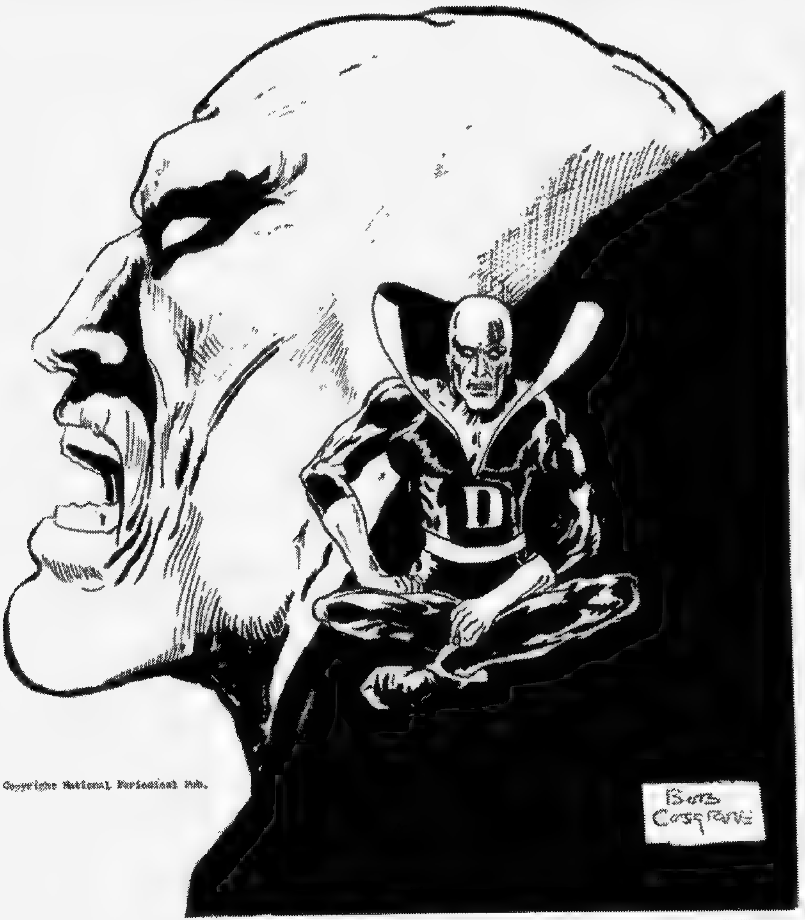


Did you know the often used picture of Flash Gordon dueling with Ming was also animated in the Whitman - Big Little Books? That's right. In the upper right hand corner of each page is a crude drawing of Flash and Ming, in a sword fight. When you flip the pages, the figures move, as if in a cartoon movie.

A Bat-item. When Batman's female foe, the Catwoman, first appeared, she wore a large cat-mask that fit completely over her head.

Can anyone confirm or set straight, who the Hulk's artist was on the Aurora model's box. With the heavy muscle lines and the scratchy shading, it could have been Neal Adams.

The Comics Code in Action? For those of you who read issue #18 of Marvel Super-Heroes - In the All Winners Squad section, where Miss America battles The Living Dead, the splash pannel has been changed slightly. In the original comic, the mummies pictured had a skeleton frame and the bandages were torn and falling off. The Comics Code probably asked that to be redrawn, so the mummies didn't look like skeletons. What amazed me though, was the fact they let Marvel use that story at all. Living Dead was one of the Comics Code's big objections in the '50's.



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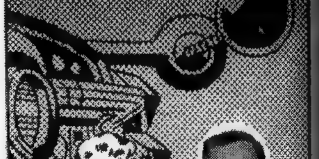
More news from Marvel - Jim Steranko has only done three issues of Captain America - after which John Buscema will take over the art chores. Jim informed me, that of the three Captain America stories he did, the second one is his personal favorite.

I myself think that Cap has never seen as great art, as when Jim Steranko handled him. Not knocking Jack Kirby, but those Steranko - Captain America issues will always hold a special place in my collection. I hope Jim will go back on Cap in the near future.

Jim's TALON book is almost ready to be published and it will not go before the Comics Code. I believe it will be published independently of Marvel.

You can see a preview of TALON in Wally Wood's book "Witzend". It's a dollar per issue or a $4.00 subscription rate. Send to:

Wallace Wood
Box 882,
Ansonia Station,
New York, N.Y.,
10023.



YE EDITOR and a FRIEND

There's a new artist at Marvel, I'm told we should watch for. His name is Barry Smith and I think he'll be doing a Daredevil.

Well that's all for this issue. Comic Crusader #5 will be out in March. (At 35¢) I've got some great material lined up, so don't miss it. NO BRAG - JUST FACT.

Letters

SUPPLEMENT TO COMIC CRUSADER #4

HARVEY SOBEL - I've read the third issue of your fanzine and found it to be the best I've ever read-of all fanzines! No fooling! I haven't read too many fanzines, but this one did top them off. I raelly enjoyed your artwork, especially on the Superman vs. Captain Marvel(s) panels. You managed to capture both Curt Swan's and Gene Colan's styles combined into that one last panel. Most all of the faces of the Marvel heroes seemed to carry some trace of the original artists' style. Congrats.

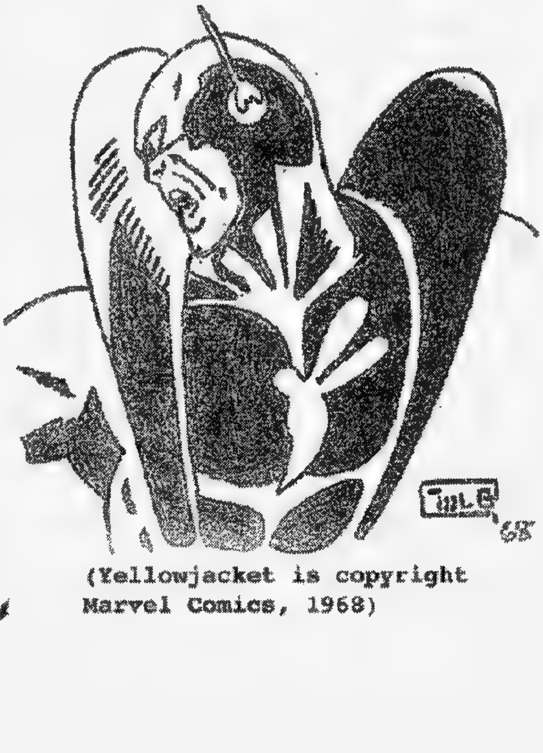
THANK YOU FOR THE KIND WORDS, HARVEY. AS FOR THE TRACES OF ORIGINAL ARTISTS STYLE, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT I TRY TO ACCOMPLISH.I DO THIS MOSTLY BY SHADING EACH DRAWING THE WAY THE ORIGINAL ARTIST DOES. OFTEN IT TAKES ME 5 OR 6 ATTEMPTS TO GET THE EFFECT I'M TRYING FOR. THANK GOD FOR PASTEUPS.

LINCOLN C. YACO - Comic Crusader #2 is undoubtedly the best zine to be found in the U.S. Your ama-strip "The Defender" is very well done. With the suit of Magnus, Dynamo's belt, and Goliath's visor you can't miss.

The article on Steve Ditko was great. Likewise Comic Chatter, Comic Corner, and History's Heroes. Especially History's Heroes. Hope my letter didn't bore you.

LINC - LETTERS FROM FELLOW FANS NEVER BORE ME. YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT MAGNUS AND DYNAMO BEING USED AS REFERENCE FOR THE DEFENDER. ORIGINALLY HIS SUIT WASN'T TO RESEMBLE THAT OF MAGNUS, BUT THE FINISHED PRODUCT TURNED OUT THAT WAY. I DO THINK IT GIVES THE CHARACTER A BIT OF A PRO TOUCH, THOUGH. THE VISOR HOWEVER, IS NOT GOLIATH'S. THE DEFENDER WAS BEING PRINTED WHEN THAT CHARACTER CAME OUT. IT'S JUST A COINCIDENCE.

CHARLES H. PERKINS - I thought I'd drop you a note saying how pleased I was with Comic Crusader #3. The coverage of the S.C.A.R.P.convention was excellent. After reading the article, I felt as if I had actually been to the con.You managed to give a very detailed portrayal of the events, without boring the reader with trivia, which is often apparent in this kind of article. I only wish that you could have included more pictures, and that you could have gone into the individual speeches by the pros in more detail. I also wish that you could print some of the conversation that you had with Jim Steranko in a future issue. Mister Steranko is definitely an artist whose ideas are going to affect the entire industry and an interview with him would be most interesting. The resst of the zine was quite interesting, too, with a few exceptions. "The First Inhumans" article was superb; however a number of the shorter articles seemed worthless, particularly the Shock Gibson and costume contest articles which could have been left out. They gave the appearance of "filler" articles. The letter column was far too abbreviated. The art in the Defender strip was some of the best I've found in fandom, but its shortness



(Yellowjacket is copyright Marvel Comics, 1968) did not allow any kind of plot to form. The strip was an action sequence and no more.

CHARLIE, I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE INCLUDED MORE PICTURES, AS WELL AS GOING INTO MORE DETAIL ABOUT THE PROS' SPEECHES, BUT SPACE AND MONEY LIMITATIONS PREVENTED ME FROM DOING SO.

I EMPHATICALLY AGREE WITH YOUR STATEMENT, "MR. STERANKO IS DEFINITELY AN ARTIST WHOSE IDEAS ARE GOING TO AFFECT THE ENTIRE COMICS INDUSTRY". THEY NOT ONLY WILL, BUT IN MANY CASES, ALREADY HAVE. YOU MUST HAVE MISSED THE FIRST ISSUE OF THIS ZINE. IT CONTAINED AN INTERVIEW WITH JIM. HOWEVER KEEP YOUR EYE ON THIS PUBLICATION FOR A SPECIAL THAT WILL LIST THE INOVATIONS HE'S MADE IN THE COMICS FIELD.

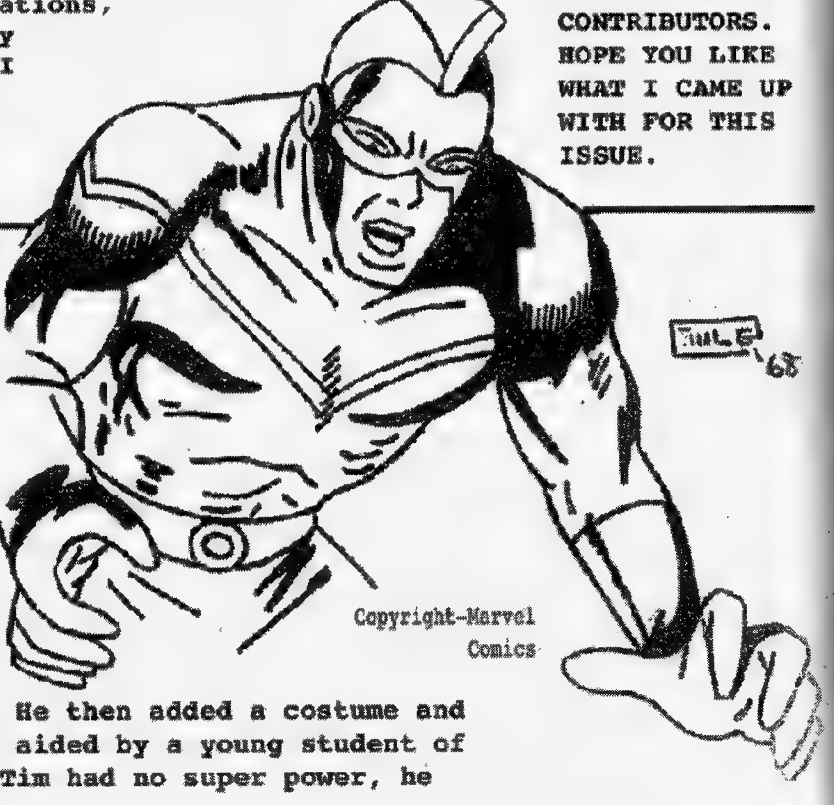
YOU MAY BE RIGHT ABOUT THE SHORT FEATURES, THE COSTUME CONTEST WAS PART OF THE CON REPORT. THE DEFENDER STRIP IS A CONTINUED FEATURE AND MUST BE FOLLOWED TO SEE THE PLOT DEVELOPEMENT.

ROBERT SHOENFELD - (Ed.- Gosh Wow!) I thought all zine eds sent copies to fans mentioned or in some way referred to in their publications, but I had to pay for my copy of C.C.! Seriously though, I must have gone through the con article twice before discovering my picture just behind Al Williamson. That's me standing behind, to his left, our right. I look like a smiling escort or something. Aside from giving Al a mention and failing to give me one, I enjoyed C.C. tremendously.

This isn't intended as a critical LOC, but I would like to suggest that you beef up some of the shorter articles, as several of them are worthy of expansion. I would also like to see some additional artists and writers added to the C.C. staff. Ask around, send a few sample issues out and you'll probably be surprised at the kind of contributions you're capable of attracting.

But for God's sake, don't bill C.C. as "Fandom's Reader's Digest". Readers Digest is among the lowest of the low among serious magazine readers. It offers nothing but misdirected bias and watered down bull shit for old women. Among some circles its referred to as "The Bible of the Bourgoise".

I DID AS YOU SUGGESTED. I ASKED AROUND FOR ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS. HOPE YOU LIKE WHAT I CAME UP WITH FOR THIS ISSUE.



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CAPTAIN WONDER

Captain Wonder was first introduced in Kid Komix #1, 1943. He was in reality Prof. Jordan, a teacher at Central High. He gained the strength of a dozen men when he dropped a wonder drug he'd just invented and inhaled its fumes. With the drug in his system his muscles grew stronger til he posessed tremendous. He then added a costume and became Capt. Wonder. He was aided by a young student of his, Tim Mulrooney. Though Tim had no super power, he was still an able assistant.

BETWEEN YOU AND BOB COSGROVE, I'M BEGINNING TO WISH I'D NEVER HEARD OF READER'S DIGEST. SO STARTING WITH THIS ISSUE I'M USING THE TITLE I DREAMED UP FOR BOB'S ZINE, CHAMPION: "THE FANZINE WITH THE FAN IN MIND". HOPE YOU LIKE THIS. READER'S DIGEST... HOO BOY! MUTTER, MUTTER...

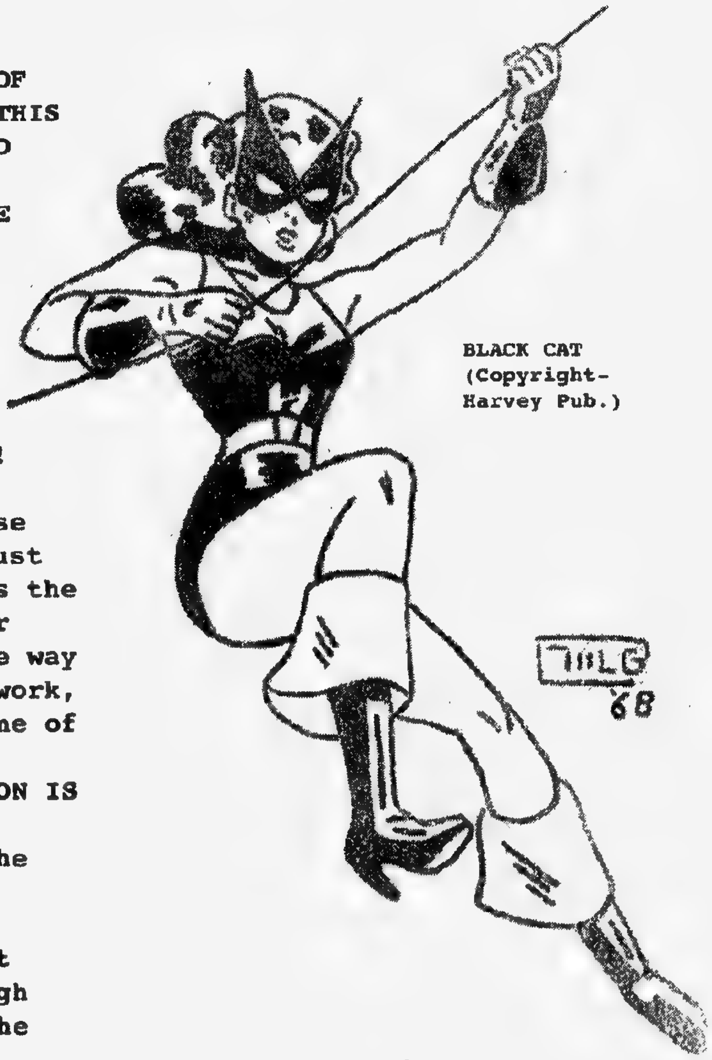
LARRY HERNDON (Editor of Star Studded Comics) Another great issue, highlighted by the con article and the First Inhumans feature. Gak! You won Jim Steranko! Sigh, envy, pure green envy!! Your art continues to improve...all those tips you picked up from the pros must be paying off. Your front cover was the best you've done yet. Your Defender pages were excellent and I like the way the storyline is going. Excellent work, Marty. Your zine continues to be one of the best in fandom.

AS ALWAYS, PRAISE FROM LARRY HERNDON IS MOST WELCOME.

WILLIAM STRAW (Ontario Canada) - The second issue of Comic Crusader was well worth waiting for. (Now isn't that an original phrase?) the first thing I thought as I flipped through it was the cleverness with which the articles were named. Being a fan of Flash Gordon; Mongo Mania interested me, despite the fact that I've been unable to acquire any of Raymond's Big Little Books, though I have tried.

The spotlight on Ditko was informative, since you told of some of his earlier comics, which I had been unable to trace. My interest in Super Rabbit was enhanced by your article "The First Inhumans". I share your admiration of Bill Everett and your desire for an original pic of Subby. I think Bill's best work was the sci-fi/horror covers he did for Atlas.

NICE TO HEAR FROM A CANADIAN FAN, BILL. YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE TO MENTION ARTICLE TITLES. I TRY TO PUT QUITE A BIT OF THOUGHT INTO THEM.



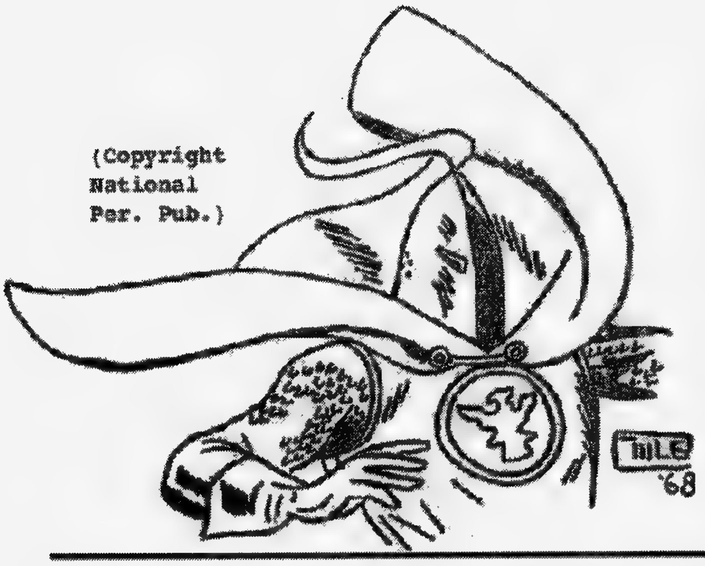
BLACK CAT
(Copyright-
Harvey Pub.)

JON G. JENSEN - It's been so long between issues, I thought it would never come. But I was wrong, it did and what a welcome surprise it was! That was not an idle boast, but a cold fact.

Starting where I always start, with the cover, which wasn't bad. I kinda liked the idea. You don't see much of Captain Marvel in this day and age, at least the old one, anyway. One thing that really could have been omitted was the blurb "Scarp Con". In any case, a good cover though I beleive more background should have been used.

Contents page was kinda jumbled up, better watch that. It really hinders, at least in a small way. Remember layout is very important in the making of a good zine.

Before going on with the issue, I I would like to say that I really



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THE SILENT KNIGHT

The Silent Knight appeared in Brave and the Bold comics during the mid 50s. He was really Brian, heir to the throne of Greystone Castle. He donned a suit of armor which his pet falcon Slasher led him to in in the Forest Perilous, and obtained the abilities of the greatest knights. He used this power to fight Sir Edwin, a tyrant who ruled the land til he came of age. However, Brian had to remain silent, lest his voice betray his true identity.

---

enjoy reading the reports of cons that that are particularly interesting to all, in all feilds and aspects, and the SCARP con was just this, altho I was not there, due to the fact I'm from Wisconsin,it is almost as enjoying to read about them as it is to be there - providing of course they are well written.

Stan Lee's speech was intersting, but possibly not as much as the other attendees were. I think other pros such as Will Eisner or Al Williamson would be much more interesting to talk to - as not as much is known about these two. One thing I did was interesting though, was Mr. Lee's view of why EC died. I think he really hit it: injecting too much sex and horror can kill anything.

Bob did a very good job of retelling the bulk of the con. It was very enjoyable reading, especially after reading about the paintings of Gray Morrow. I was now ready to die for not being there. Dick Giordano sounds like a very nice guy and sometime I would like to meet him (among others). The question period with Stan Lee was interesting also. I wish I could have had the chance to ask him why he doesn't use more of Adkins & Severin, rather than lesser artists like Tuska and Trimpe. One thing Stan is, is a terrible judge of art. What he really needs is an art director and it should be made clear that he does. One point that I really thought was amusing, was at the beginning of the panel discussion, Dick Giordano said it beautifully: "Stan Lee is a man who needs no introduction, and if he did, I'll be darned if I'll be the one to give it." It just couldn't have bee said better than that. Thanks for relating that point to us, Bob. The panel brought up another interesting point - artist, writer, editor together has to be first, very talented, and second has to be the best there is, and Wally Wood IS.

The First Inhumans again was good, but it looks like the end of a new and unique column. Just think, I was one of the only people who first did not like it. However, you've converted me. Mongo Mania was another good review of that great Flash Gordon, someone I never get tired of.

Concerning the costume contest, it was no wonder that Iron Man won won the prize for the most humorous costume, for it was. I also enjoyed your poke at Dr. Wertham.

Thanks for bidding me #1 cover critic. It was appreciated.

JON, I TYPED YOUR LETTER AS YOU SENT IT TO ME. I TAKE IT YOU ARE A YOUNGER FAN. YOUR LETTER SHOWS THIS. I WISH IN THE FUTURE, THOUGH, YOU'D TAKE A LITTLE TIME TO PROOF READ YOUR LETTERS. NO OFFENSE.

A Visit From batman

by Tom Fagan

Long before comic fandom was officially organized with its Cons, zines and networks crossing continents, one fan project was in full swing. It still swings today and because of it each Halloween night in the tiny city of Rutland, Vermont, enjoys an annual visit from...The Batman!

In Rutland one doesn't speak of Halloween without mentioning in the same breath "The Parade" and "Batman". It's been that way for eight years and now Halloween of 1969 bids to be the same; "Batman" will be there.

How did it all begin? In 1960 the Rutland Recreation Department had a Halloween Parade. It wasn't a particularly long procession, just two bands and kids from a few schools marching in costume. But it had spirit and it sparked the imagination of two Batman fans who by chance happened on the scene.

Recreation Commisioner John Gioffredi gave his blessing to the idea which was born. The very next year, who took who took parade marshall leadership? None other than Batman, together with a friend, Ashley the Bat.

The Batfloat too, made its first appearance that year of 1961. Its huge poster noted that comic book prices had just changed in price from ten cents to twelve cents. Members of the Night Legion, Rutland County Charter Chapter, who sponsored the float and also pitched in to work on the parade, had done their work well. Headlines read: "Halloween A Huge Success; over 1,000 march with Batman."

Several bands, More floats, a Mr. Jack O'Lantern contest, the crowning of a Pumpkin Princess to rule over the procession, were in turn added to the parade program. Later the Batmanians, Vermont Coven, joined in and the parade became bigger and better than the last one.

Though Ashley flitted away eventually, Batman was soon joined by others of the "Bat-Family". Greeting parade watchers alongside the Caped Crusader were Robin, the Boy Wonder, the "old" Batwoman, Batmite, and the "new" Batgirl.

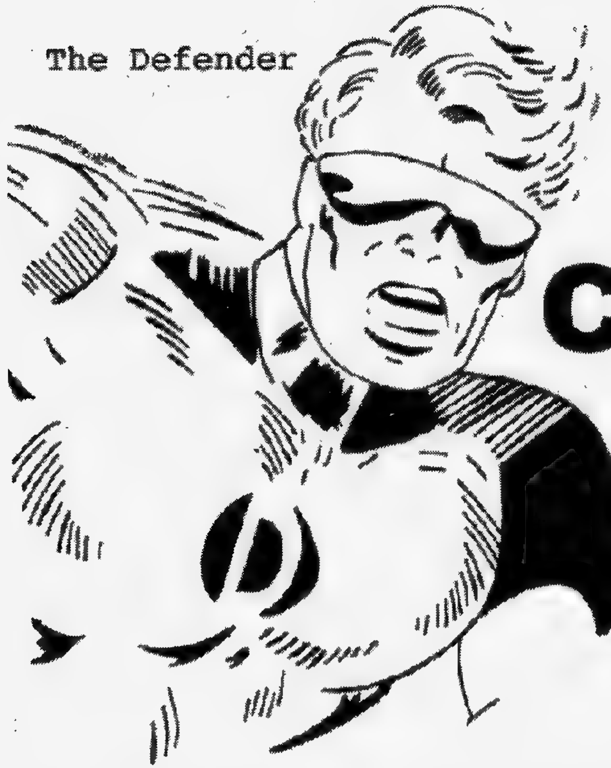
1965 saw the Bat-People menaced by The Joker, and a visit from Dr. Strange and Plastic man. The latter two rode in splendor on their own float.

In 1966, The Batfloat theme was "It's Bat-Time!", heralding the then-new Batman TV series. Batgirl was parade sweetheart of 1967, with the the float announcing: "Meet the new Batgirl!" It was the year of nation-wide coverage for the parade as the Associated Press wrote up a story for the wire services.

This past year, Batman, Robin, the "new" Batgirl and Batmite again took stance, this time against a backdrop of "Bat Power!" that showed the caped crusaders in action poses. Even a villain showed up to menace them...the nefarious Red Skull!

It will be a very special parade October 31st, 1969. it's a 10th anniversary celelbration. Batman and his friends have had promises of parade participation from Spider-Man, Sue, of the Fantastic Four, and other costumed heroes. Maybe even the Blue Barber. Come to see; better yet, come to march. Batman will see you in Rutland, his second home every October 31st.

The Defender



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#5

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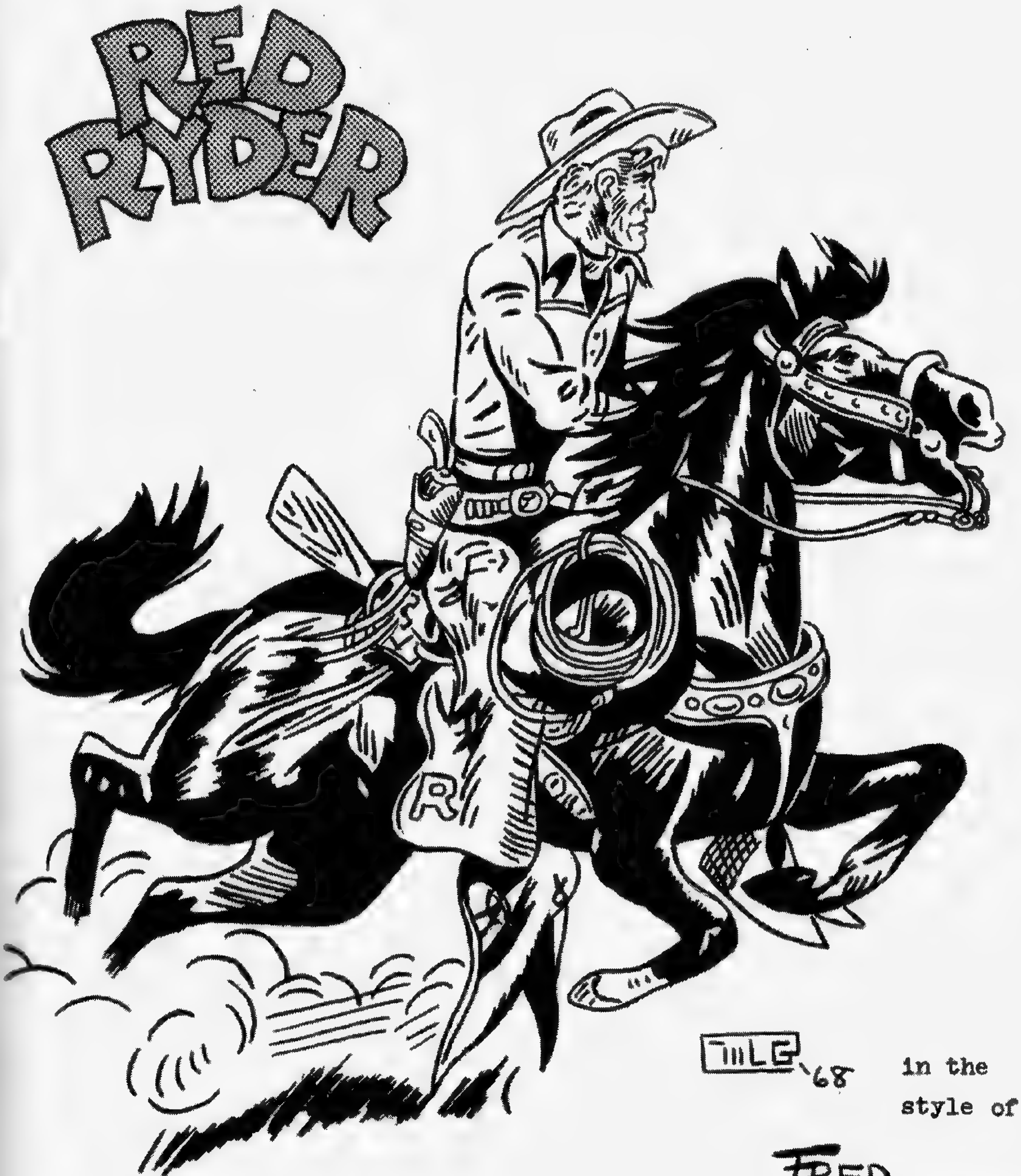
THE COMIC CRUSADER
Vol. 1. No. 4

The Fanzine
with the
Fan in
Mind


RED RYDER
R
MLG '68

in the
style of

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The COMIC CRUSADER

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NO.

5

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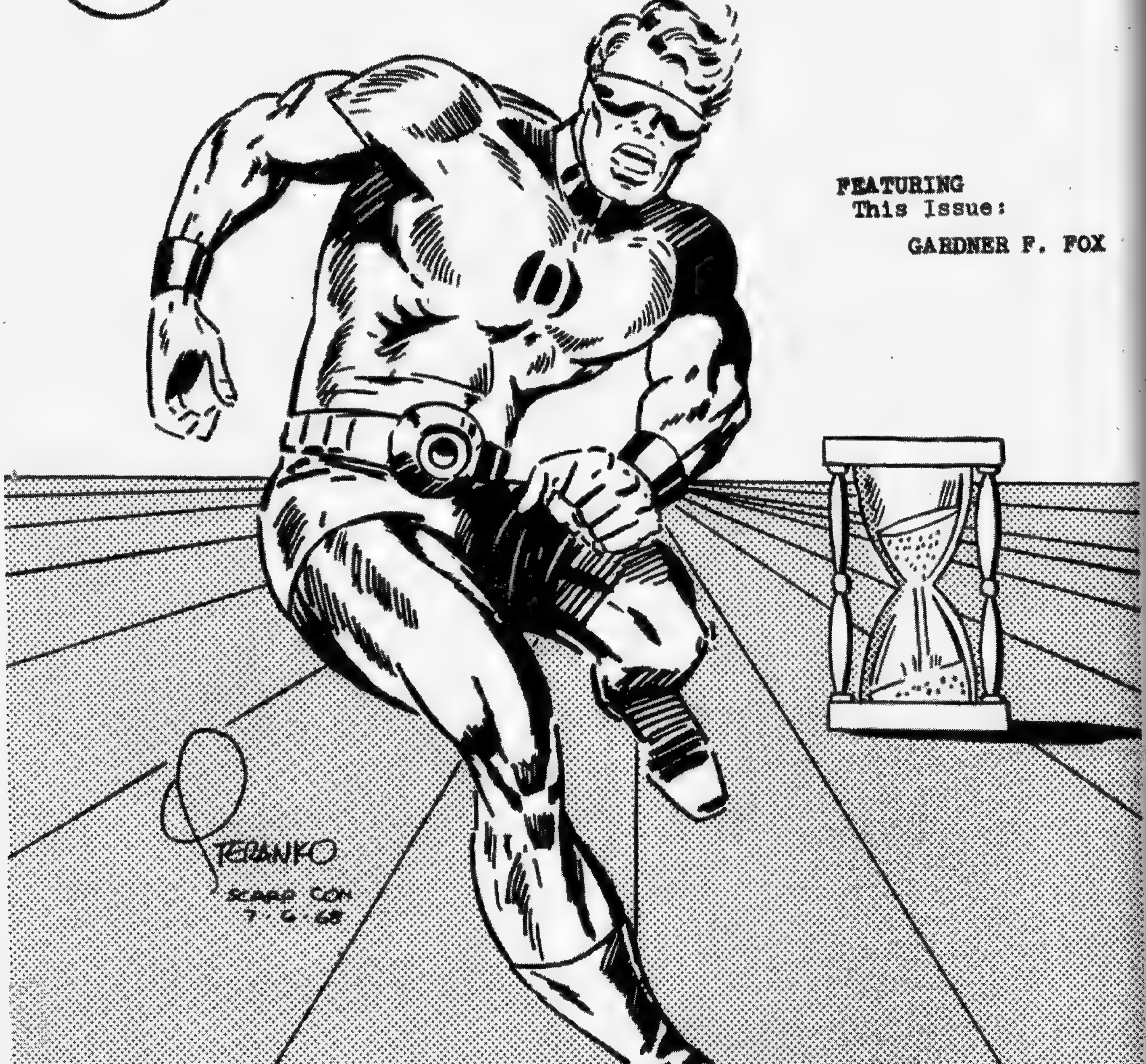
This Issue:
GARDNER F. FOX


STERANKO
SCARP CON
7·6·68

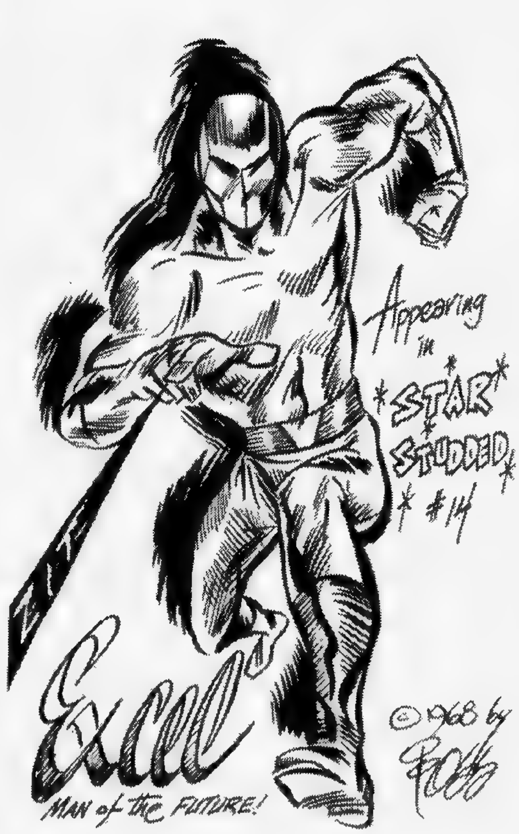
CRUSADER COMMENTS

Greetings, my fellow fans. Glad to have you along. This issue of The Comic Crusader marks my second year of publishing my own fanzine. Looking back, over the past year, I owe much to many fans and pros alike.

JIM STERANKO has my undying thanks. For it was his interview, that graced my very first issue and his art, represented on this issue's cover and his full page Nick Fury drawing, last issue, that helped my publication attain the status that it has today. Jim, you're a true friend. STEVE DITKO too, has helped my publication tremendously. His kindness to an unknown makes me very proud that I know him. Steve - what can I say? JOHN FANTUCCHIO brought his tremendous talents to these pages, giving this zine the extra bit of class it needed. And Steve Fritz. With this issue, Steve becomes a regular staff member. His art ranks with the best. Glad to have you Steve. You'll notice, in this issue, that I have not spotlighted any fan. Because of the abundance of material, I had no room. However, next issue, you'll meet DONNA L. ASTIN one of the top female fans around. TOM FAGAN is another friend I couldn't do without. His Airboy article and other material he's done for me, makes this zine really fly.

Looking ahead to this year, I'm very pleased to have a fan, that I've admired since I brought my first fanzine, contribute to Crusader. His name-RONN FOSS. From Hawaii comes another new staff member - DENNIS FUJITAKE. His work is some of the best I've seen and it's represented by my back cover. You'll hear more about him and some other fans from Hawaii, next issue. Other fans who have contributed are - Bill Wilson, John Lawrence, PAL, John McGeehan, Wade Hampton and the guy I couldn't do an issue without - last, but far from the least- [illegible] COSGROVE.

I'd like to take the remaining space to voice an opinion about two things I've noticed in Fandom of late. First - Recently, I've been asked by some other zines, to offer my opinion on politics and world affairs. I've declined, for the following reason. Fandom is a place where one should enjoy the hobby he is interested in - Reading Comics! Not that fans don't have opinions, but a fanzine isn't the vehicle to voice them in. If you want to read or comment about politics, and the like, read or send letters to Newsweek or Time. My second beef, is derogatory articles about comic pros. Recently, I read an article entitled, "Slobberin' Stan Lee". Needless to say, the article was anti-Lee. Fandom may dislike a pro, but remember this - These men are in a business. They work at selling a product. No fan has the right to insult them. They deserve the same respect you would give anyone else you do business with. Disagree, yes, but do it with taste. Here's hoping you enjoy this and the coming issues of Comic Crusader.



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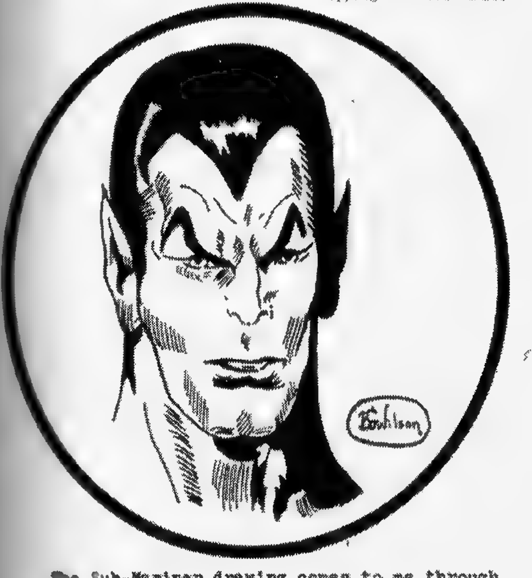
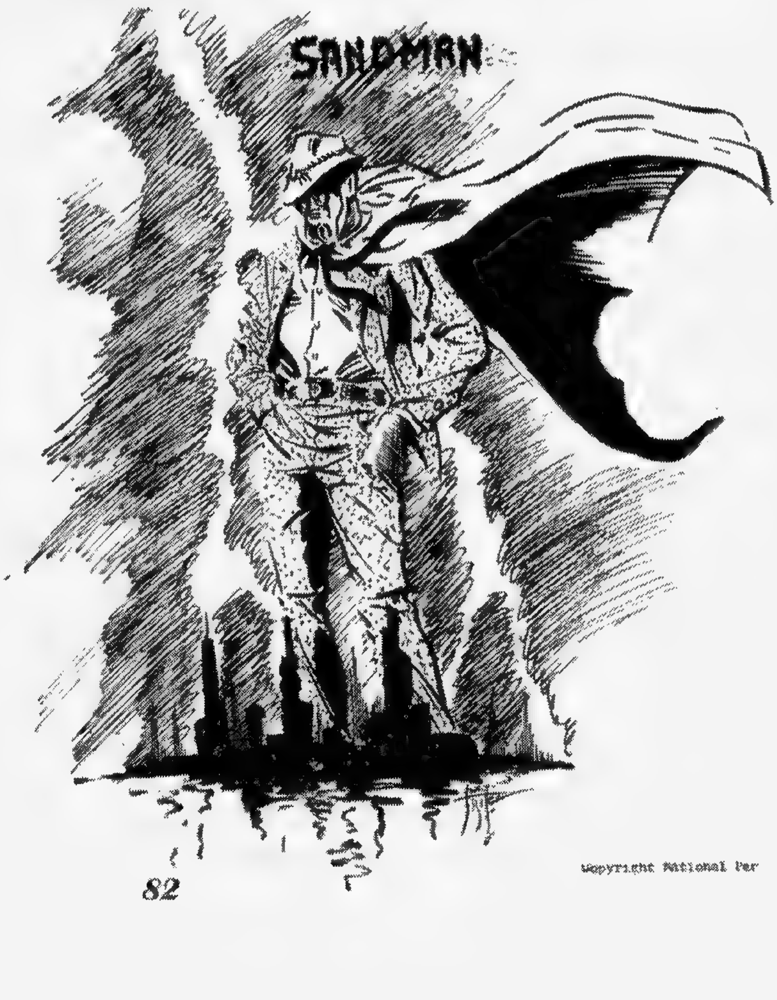


The Sub-Mariner drawing comes to me through the courtesy of Bill Wilson, editor of THE COLLECTOR.



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The Fan In Mind

This column is an irregular one, devoted to the furthering of our hobby, The Reading of Comics. The topic this issue:

selective buying

by
D. L. DILLINGER

Capt. Marvel Jr.

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I think we recognize that certain titles consistently have good material (Fantastic Four, Thunder Agents, etc.) and therefore they sell at a premium price. There are other titles, however, which may have had good material for just a few issues (like Jack Kirby drawing Green Arrow in ADVENTURE COMICS 250-256). Comics like these can be picked up for 50¢-$1.25 each, where-as better known Kirby art in other titles draw a much higher price.

The following is meant to be a guide (by no means complete!) to selective buying in the SECOND HEROIC AGE OF COMICS (1955 to present). I've found that because few people know the value of these select comics, you can often buy them in Fanzines very reasonably; and by showing them to local fans, really have a trading edge. Even a Marvel Addict might trade for some Kirby or Wally Wood material by another company.

Most collectors don't list these select issues differently, or at a higher price, usually for three reasons: (1) Too much trouble and ad space, (2) Fandom in general doesn't know about it, and therefore won't pay more, (3) They weren't aware of the difference themselves, anyway.

NATIONAL COMICS

ADVENTURE Any issue before 208 (1955) except for 205, has Johnny Quick; a predecessor to our modern-day Flash. Needless to say, both Johnny Quick, and Superboy debuted in ADVENTURE 103. #247 Is the first Legion of Super Heroes. #250-256 Has some fine Jack Kirby art on Green Arrow, 256 is G.A.'s origin.

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN 1-7 Jack Kirby did the first seven issues, Wally Wood teamed up with Kirby on 4-7 for some of the finest art in Comicdom ever. #64,65 Reprints their very first story and origin, as presented in Showcase #6. If you missed these two recent ones, you can probably pick them up at a 2nd hand comic book store for 6-8¢ each.

MYSTERY IN SPACE 87-91 Along with the fine Adam Strange strip, Hawkman appeared in these issues.

SUPERMAN 76 A real gem, the first joint appearance of the Superman, Batman team. #146 Superman's origin and life story.

WORLD'S FINEST #71 First issue with Batman & Superman in the same story. #94 Origin of the Superman, Batman team.

And of course NATIONAL wouldn't be complete without mentioning SHOWCASE and THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD...to cover each issue would be too time consumeing--but basically remember this:

SHOWCASE #4,6-14 are valuable
4,6,13,14 having the FLASH
6,7,11,12, having the CHALLS by Kirby
9,10 having Lois Lane, with SUPERMAN

#5 as well as 1-3, were not Super-heroes, and have less of a value. 15-21 are taken up by SPACE RANGER (15-16), ADAM STRANGE (17-19), and RIP HUNTER (20,21). 22-24 however are GREEN LANTERN.

SHOWCASE and BRAVE & BOLD command high prices, and are well known. They are included here for the sake of the "unenlightened few".

BRAVE & BOLD No super-heroes until the J.L.A. in #28-30, and many issues after that were not super-hero material also, be careful.

Now lets skip to other publishers.

PEP 127-142,144 and LAUGH 150-160, 168 although not featured on the cover, all those issues had either a JAGUAR, FLY, or FLY GIRL story. THE FLY 1-4 and PVT. STRONG (SHIELD)1-2 Were done by Jack Kirby.

Most people know that Paul Reinman's version of the Golden Age SHIELD debuted in FLYMAN #31 (1965), which isn't too valuable; but Kirby's different version (1959-1960) in addition to appearing in his own comic (PVT. STRONG), appeared in short two page stories in THE FLY 1-4 and then by another artist teamed up with the FLY in #8, and #9. Also of note; the Golden Age BLACK HOOD made his comeback in FLY #7, and appeared again in #10.

KING'S - FLASH GORDON

1,4,5	Had Al Williamson
7	Had Mac Raboy reprints
9,10	Had Alex Raymond reprints
6,8,11,	
12	Had Reed Crandall
13	Had Jeff Jones

#2 and #3 were done by other artists, and in the opinion of many fans, not worth much.

Also for FLASH GORDON fans, Wally Wood drew a short F.G. feature in PHANTOM #18 and Gil Kane did the last two parts of the series in PHANTOM #19 and #20.

Also, little known is that the PEACEMAKER debuted in Fighting Five #40, and again appeared in #41.

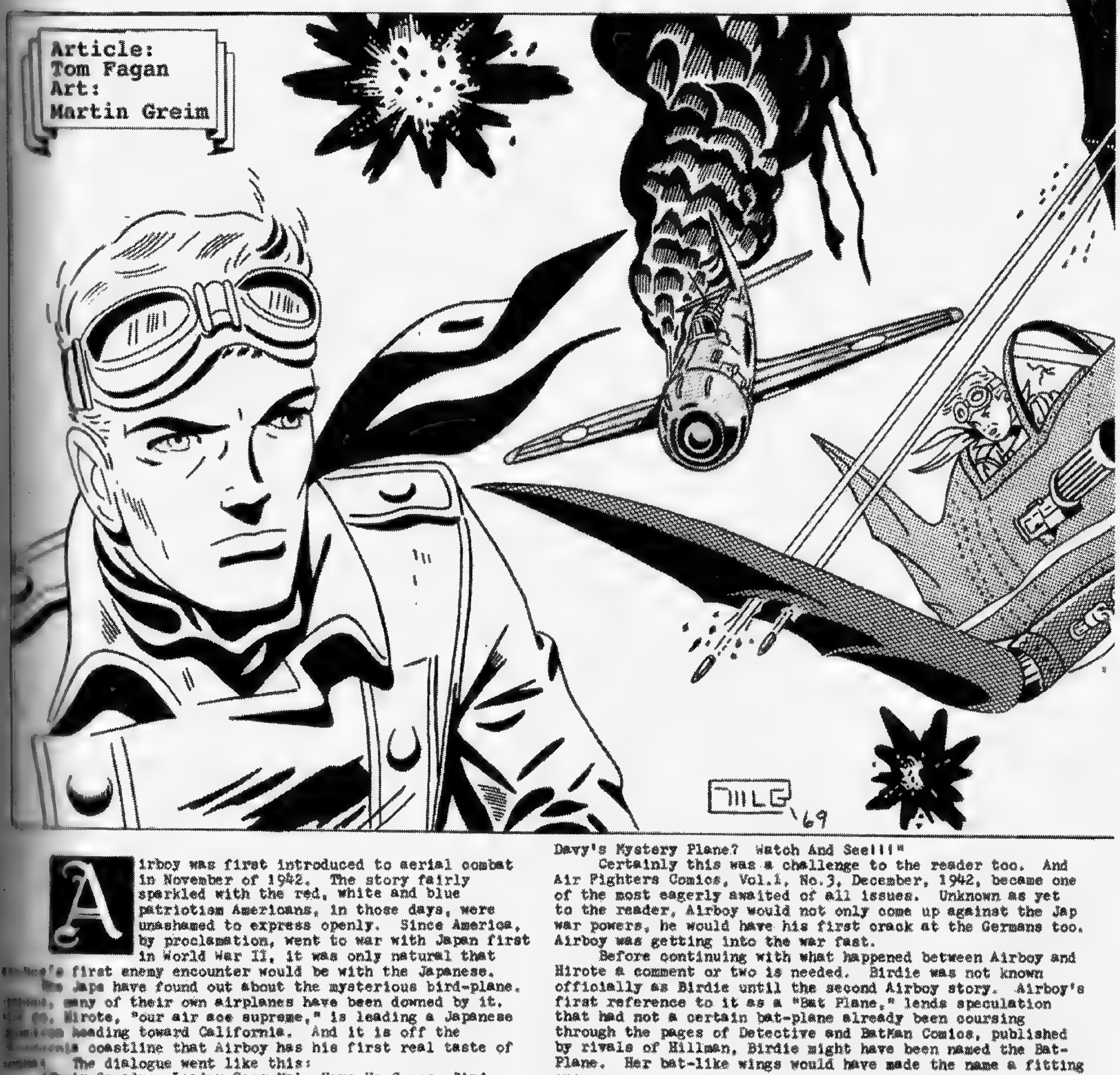
Of over 100 issues of HARVEY HITS published (1957-1966), only eight have any value, they are: 1,6,12,15,26,36,44,48 all of which have some fine Wilson McCoy or Ray Moore art on the PHANTOM. Some of the HARVEY HITS are reprints from the early 1940's. THE SPIRIT #1,2 Some beautiful Will Eisner work. FIGHTING AMERICAN #1 A must for SIMON & KIRBY fans. BLAST OFF#1 (1965) An all Al Williamson, Jack Kirby issue. UN-EARTHLY SPECTACULARS #2,3, Both are 64pg. comics. #2 has Williamson, Wood, and Gil Kane. #3 has some Kirby and Williamson art. #1 is a 32 pg. comic and not worth as much.

It would be wise to get some of the SUPER or I.W. reprint comics, especially the PLASTICMAN (11,16,18), and THE SPIRIT (12). Other titles contain lesser known Golden Age super-heroes, and if the price is right, it wouldn't hurt to get a few (Doll Man, Daring Adventures, Danger, etc.)

HAPPY COLLECTING! D.L. DILLINGER 4205 NOTTER AVE. JACKSONVILLE, FLA. 32206.

AIRBOY PART 2

"AND DID YOU NOT



Article:
Tom Fagan
Art:
Martin Greim

Airboy was first introduced to aerial combat in November of 1942. The story fairly sparkled with the red, white and blue patriotism Americans, in those days, were unashamed to express openly. Since America, by proclamation, went to war with Japan first in World War II, it was only natural that Airboy's first enemy encounter would be with the Japanese.

The Japs have found out about the mysterious bird-plane. [illegible], many of their own airplanes have been downed by it. [illegible] Co. Hirote, "our air ace supreme," is leading a Japanese squadron heading toward California. And it is off the [illegible] coastline that Airboy has his first real taste of [illegible]. The dialogue went like this:

"Their Squadron Leader Sees Me! Here He Comes, Bird [illegible]! We'll Show 'em The Stuff We Americans Are Made Of! [illegible] It!!!

Hirote, likewise, has his own intentions. The reader is [illegible] the Jap pilot has 68 planes to his discredit. Viewing [illegible] and the bird-plane, Hirote grins evilly, "Soon It Will [illegible]!!!"

However, Airboy gives a good accounting of himself. The bird-plane is driven from the skies only by lack of fuel. [illegible] lands the plane and even under heaving strafing fire [illegible] to roll it to safety. As the Japs turn to leave, a [illegible] is dropped. Airboy reads it exclaiming, "I'll Be Darned! [illegible] Is The King of Jap Aces! This Is A Real Challenge!!!"

Hirote's taunting message reads, "Honorable Fighter... [illegible] Now, But Would Like Dogfight With You 30 Days From [illegible] Day--Same Time--Same Place.' If Acceptable, Please [illegible] And Bring Plenty Gas!" It was signed, "Hirote!"

Naturally, Airboy fired the gun accepting the challenge. [illegible] story's end fairly crackled with excitement promising, [illegible] month...The Most Thrilling Air Duel Ever Fought In The [illegible]. Is Hirote On The Level Or Is This A Trap To Snare Davy's Mystery Plane? Watch And See!!!"

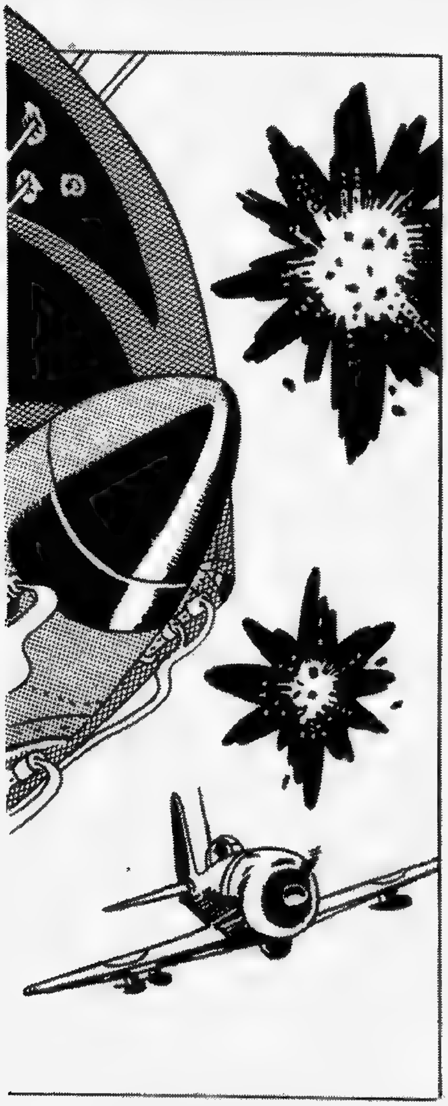
Certainly this was a challenge to the reader too. And Air Fighters Comics, Vol.1, No.3, December, 1942, became one of the most eagerly awaited of all issues. Unknown as yet to the reader, Airboy would not only come up against the Jap war powers, he would have his first crack at the Germans too. Airboy was getting into the war fast.

Before continuing with what happened between Airboy and Hirote a comment or two is needed. Birdie was not known officially as Birdie until the second Airboy story. Airboy's first reference to it as a "Bat Plane," lends speculation that had not a certain bat-plane already been coursing through the pages of Detective and BatMan Comics, published by rivals of Hillman, Birdie might have been named the Bat-Plane. Her bat-like wings would have made the name a fitting one.

Comics, particularly before the Comics Code of the '50's, were often accused of hidden symbolism. Little or any of this is to be found in Airboy stories, yet those who choose to ponder such things may have wondered at the author's erotic choise of "69" as the number for Hirote's next-intended conquest.

In startling yellows, reds and blacks, the cover of the December, 1942 issue of Air Fighters Comics presented itself to the reader. Ripping through a mockup of Page 1 of the "TOKIO NEWS" with its shocking banner headline reading AIRBOY DEAD and a smaller bank headline, ZERO DOWNS BIRD PLANE IN FLAMES, was Birdie herself--all six machine guns blazing, and Airboy gallantly seated in the cockpit, with a laughing, "Sez You!"! And you just knew you were in for a thrilling treat by the message at the lower right corner, "LIFT THIS COVER-SEE THE GREATEST AIR FIGHT IN HISTORY!"

Hillman, in its early Airboy stories, had a habit of introducing a secondary plot that would reach a conclusion in the next issue to keep a reader at fever pitch of continuing interest. This story was no exception. A vivid splash panel



showed Nazi planes in aerial combat over a war-torn city, though nowhere in the main story would this scene unfold.

A circle insert at the upper left of the panel showed Airboy climbing into Birdie and saying, "All Right, Hirote, Birdie And I Will Be Coming Up There To Meet You--And Only One Of Us Is Coming Back, Japsy--Only ONE Of Us!!"

Hirote is shown in a circle insert at the lower right. Two Japanese officers are talking to him. Says one, "Honor Of Entire Nation Rests On You, Hirote! The Rising Sun Must NOT Be Dimmed By Defeat By White Weakling!!"

Cautions the other officer, "Please, Once Again-Let Us Send Many Pursuit Plan With You For Safety Against Sad, Uncontrolable Accident In Battle!!" Hirote spurns their offer but the impression is clearly left to a youthful American reader's mind, Japanese are really never to be trusted.

Considering in actuality the sneak attack of the Japanese on the American Pearl Harbor was not yet a year old and was not comic book fiction but real-life, this propaganda whipping up of war hatred against the Japanese is excusable.

Before Airboy was to meet Hirote, the reader is introduced to the secondary storyline. Hubert Kritzel is directing a movie staring "the nation's favorite you actress, Deanna Darling. The producers are dissatisfied and criticize Kritzel, complaining, "You've Got Nazi Airmen Looking Like Handsome Heroes Instead of Villa

(Actually many Hollywood movies of the war years depicted Germans, Italians and Japanese either as bumbling, inept, ludicrous buffons or out and out villains. It wasn't until years had passed and World War II was long over before movies were made by American companies humanizing "the enemy.")

Kritzel is infuriated. But the producers' criticism is well-founded for the director is a German spy. With an infra-red camera he photographs the interior of the top-secret "Falcon Flying Fortress," sending this valuable information on to the Germans.

But Kritzel has fallen in love with Deanna Darling and kidnaps her in a stolen plane. Enroute to a waiting submarine lying off San Francisco, Kritzel and the unwilling Miss Darling encounter Airboy and Birdie who are winging their way to meet Hirote. As Deanna Darling is fighting off Kritzel, their plane dives uncontrolably earthward. Airboy maneuvers Birdie directly over Kritzel's craft--"Her Wheels Bend In--Gripping Kritzel's Plane In Vulture-Like Fashon. Both planes level out on a level flying course with Birdie still grasping the other craft. Hand to hand combat in the skies. Kritzel parachutes to earth, where he hears Airboy promise to meet Miss Darling at her home after he keeps an "appointment." Of course the appointment is with Hirote and Airboy again takes off in Birdie not realizing he is being followed by Kritzel, who has commandeered his own craft which thanks to Birdie was also landed safely.

Hirote is waiting. Airboy flys alongside his opponent. There is no gallantry passed between the two fighting aces. Airboy's comment is a sneering, "How Could Anyone With A Face Like That Shoot Us Down, Eh, Birdie?"

"A History-Making Combat Is About To Begin..." relates the story. Zero and Bird-plane battle it out in the heavens while below the crew of an American destroyer watch. Exclaims one officer, "Whatta Match-Look--The Kid's Right On His Tail!!"

Nonetheless, "the kid" is having his troubles. Hirote has gunned Birdie in the tail-section. Airboy mans his own machine guns saying grimly, "This Is A Taste Of What All You Japs Will Get Some Day!" A trick on the part of Hirote and black smoke jets from the Zero's rear section. Believing his bullets have punctured his enemy's gas tank, Airboy closes in through the blinding smoke only to find Hirote waiting for him with "singing lead."

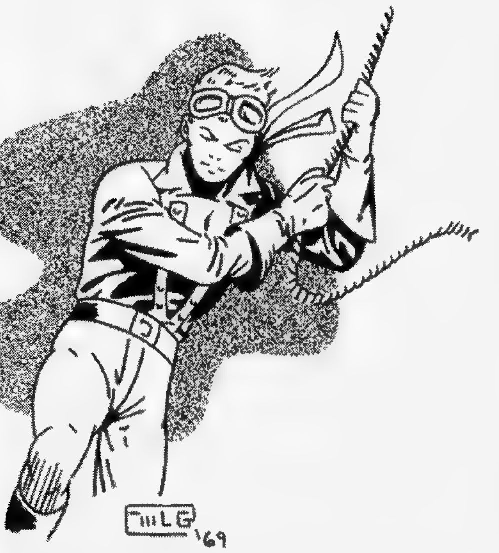
New bullets rip into Birdie's tail assembly, tearing it away. Hirote follows confident of victory. A narrow mountain pass looms ahead. Rolling sideways, the bird-plane maneuvers the narrow space between twin outcroppings of stone. Unable to pull up in time, the pursuing Zero crashes into the mountain peaks and as the story relates, "Exit Hirote, Who Was The Pride Of The Rising Sun..."

Yet new danger faces Airboy. Kritzel has been waiting and watching. His plane closes in "Primed For The Kill." With Birdie badly wrecked and "Clean Out Of Ammunition," Airboy makes the only decision possible--he aims the bird-plane head-on directly at Kritzel. "Closer, Closer--Rush The Two Hornets Of The Heavens--Hot Lead Rips Open The Belly Of Airboy's Plane--Someone Must Give Ground--BUT WHO?!!" Thinks Airboy, "One Chance In A Thousand I'll Come Out Of This--So Long, Birdie, We Had Fun!" Neither pilot gives ground. Both planes meet in a head-on blaze of light and destruction. Two parachutes drift slowly to earth. A man and a boy face one another. The man has a knife; the boy a wounded leg. And:

"Next Month...You Will See AIRBOY'S Grim, Dramatic Battle For Life On A Mountain Slope...You Will See Love, Hate And Sudden Death Sweep Through These Pages. Watch For AIRBOY #3." And Airboy #3 came on equally strong in excitement as the story unfolded in the pages of Air Fighter Comics, Vol. 1, No. 4, January, 1943. It was a tale beginning on a remote California mountain top but promising "DEATH For The Aleutian Invaders! That's The message AIRBOY, The Monarch Of The Skies, Brings To Our Back-Stabbing Foreign Foe--Relentless Warfare Until Victory Is Won!!"

But before Airboy could deliver this message, he first had to contend with a knife-weilding Kritzel, who is vowing, "But I'll Live To See AMERICA Conquered-And You Won't!" Hearts beat faster as Airboy dodged Kritzel's knife. And the tenseness was almost unbearable as the villainous Kritzel moved forward snarling, "I'm Coming AIRBOY, And I'll Crack Every Bone In Your Little Body For Humiliating An Agent Of The Reich!" A rumbling landslide! Airboy leaps to safety on an opposite ledge. Kritzel is not so fortunate and is buried beneath tons of cascading rock. Airboy's comment? "Gone! And I Guess It Was A Good End For The Rat! Hope Birdie Isn't Too Ruined!"

Birdie wasn't and Airboy was able to glide her to safer ground.



Birdie was such an integral part of the Airboy series, she is deserving of detailed mention. Humanization of a machine is not unusual. Throughout history ships have been referred to as she. A favorite car takes on the aspect of a companion to its owner. A favored device in the writing of fiction is simply having someone for the hero to "talk to." In the case of Airboy "Something" was a substitute for "some one"

Airboy had no need for a human aerial sidekick. His companion was Birdie and he spoke to her as they flew through the skies on battle missions as if she was a real person. And alone in the heavens as they [illegible], boy and plane became confidant and confident to one another. Those who read and thrilled to the Airboy saga do not recall Airboy without in the same instant recalling Birdie. The two were inseperable. Birdie was to Airboy, as a warrior steed was to knights of centuries past.

Mention has been made how Birdie could hover in the air, remain hidden in cloud banks and take off almost straight up if need called for it. She could also be controlled by a tiny electrical unit which in later stories was secreted under Airboy's jacket lapel. In theorizing about Birdie, Ephraim Blood of Ticonderoga, N.Y., a modern-day authority on war and weaponry, opinions:

"My guess would be that 'Birdie' weighs in at [illegible],000 pounds. That's about what the 'British Hurricane' weighed. My guess is that the two planes were about the same size. To my eye 'Birdie' resembles Leonardo Da Vinci's 'Bat-Glider' design rather than any aircraft current in the late '30's and early '40's. The wings are suggestive of da Vinci's design, while the fuselage looks like a [illegible] calibre bullet much enlarged. Of course, wing similarity can be found in comparing 'Birdie' with the German 'Rumpler' of World War I, as well as the French 'Spad' of that era."

In later Airboy stories, Blood points out:

"Yes, 'Birdie' was definitely jet-powered; the wings no longer flapped. Jet air intakes were fashioned in the wing roots and an exhaust outlet at the rear of the fuselage beneath the tail. There were also extra fuel tanks paired into the wings at the point where they hinged."

Birdie's "secrets" were also told within the stories themselves. In the December, 1942 issue of Air Fighters, Airboy explained the workings of the [illegible]-jet Birdie thusly:

"Instead of opening a throttle, I just press this button--the harder I push, the faster the wings flap, and the higher I go!! The tail and wings are built to let me stop in an instant and turn about! Birdie's really a Mechanical Bird--There's Hardly any difference at all!!!" In Air Fighters, January-1943, Airboy told: "Birdie has a rubberized covering--and that periscope on the windshield enables me to see an enemy plane without turning my head--and shoot it down with my tail gun!"

Evidently the "periscope" was soon found to be an unnecessary piece of equipment for it was in this one particular issue alone that it was used or shown as part of the planes fighting devices. Birdie was heavily armed. Besides the aforementioned Tail Gun, fire power was bolstered by twin machine guns on each wing, and heavier machine guns, one mounted on each side of the cockpit so that the pilot had merely to reach out an arm to operate either one. All told the early Bird-plane boasted cannon power of seven guns. A diagram drawing of the bird-plane, shown in the January tale, read: in part:

"The Wing Covering Is A Rubberized Canvas--This Enables The Wing To Telescope Fore To Aft, Giving It Slower Or Faster Landing Speed As Desired." And as Airboy, himself said, "As You Know My Wings Fold Up And I Can Stop Birdie In Midair."

In a demonstration of Birdie's amazing aerial acrobatics, Airboy dove the bird-plane toward a waiting figure on a rooftop. Swooping in gracefully, Birdie "picked up" the man with her wheels, carried him into the sky and then like a winged feather swooped down again releasing the man safely upon the ground.

Just as in Westerns where the top gun fighter is always the target of another anxious to make his own ruputation, Airboy was likewise, the ultimate target of enemy aerial aces. Hiroto had failed to down him, Kritzel was no luckier, and it was inevitable there would always be others trying to seize the crown of the sky-ways.

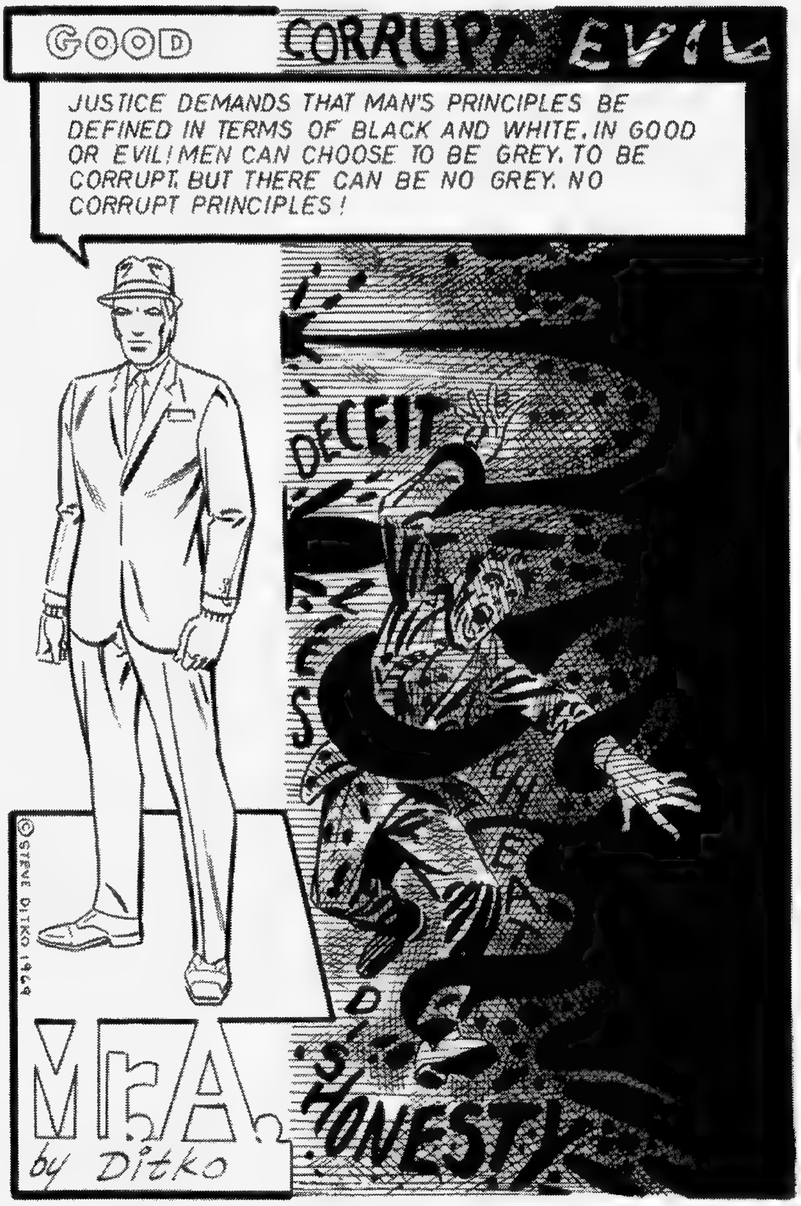
The most formidable of all Airboy's opponents was strangely enough--a woman! Summing up her personality can best be done by quoting a childish rhyme,

"When she was good, she was very, very good. But when she was bad, she was horrid."

[illegible] again it is my honor to present Mr. A by.....

STEVE DITKO

[illegible] drawing heralds the big news about next issue. Next issue The Defender strip will be replaced by the begining of a 2-part Mr. A strip by Steve Ditko. This strip is really something different, so don't [illegible] it.


GOOD
CORRUPT
EVIL
JUSTICE DEMANDS THAT MAN'S PRINCIPLES BE DEFINED IN TERMS OF BLACK AND WHITE. IN GOOD OR EVIL! MEN CAN CHOOSE TO BE GREY. TO BE CORRUPT. BUT THERE CAN BE NO GREY. NO CORRUPT PRINCIPLES!
DECEIT
DISHONESTY
© STEVE DITKO 1969
Mr. A.
by Ditko

This was VALKYRIE! A woman alluringly beautiful, taught in the ways of wickedness by the Germans, but born of an inner softness that in a moment could change to hard unyielding vengance.

That Airboy and Valkyrie were attracted to one another is true. But in Valkyrie's shifting personality the seeds of love could and would change radically to streams of hatred. In some stories, it was she who saved Airboy's life, in others she did her best to bring about his death.

The unforgetable first meeting of the boy and the woman took place in Air Fighters Comics, Vol. 2, No.2, November, 1943. The cover of this comic alone promised memorable adventures. "LATEST WAR THRILLS! 10¢" screamed a secondary logo. And for all the world to see Airboy lay streched on a dimly lighted dungeon floor. His arms are manacled with heavy chains. His red jacket has been shredded and torn. Across his bare chest and back are the ugly, vicious scars of the whip. Above him, one hand clenched toward the sky and the other brandishing a deadly looking automatic is VALKYRIE. Her face is triumphant and wild as she sneers, "It's VALKYRIE, AIRBOY--And The AIRMAIDENS Are With Me!!! Not Even SKYWOLF, The Iron Ace, Black Angel Or Flying Dutchman Can Save You Now!"

Inside more of the same and Valkyrie wearing the costume that is to become familiar to a decade of readers. A soft pale green, form-fitting, blouse of satin, equally-tight slacks of pale red, descending into flying boots. A cape with fured collar completes the dress.

Barry Kida is the artist. His skill in drawing the strip adds new heights. The stage is set. The beginning story line goes like this...

"For This Fear Is Not Ugly--It Is BEAUTIFUL--As Beautiful As A Girl Who Calls Herself VALKYRIE! She Is Not Human--Her Heart Is As Black As The Devil's...And Under Her Spell, AIRBOY Faces The Most Terrifying Adventure Of His Career!!"

Immediately action! Nazi ships knifing through the darkness of English skies. An intercepting British squadron cut to ribbons. "Heil Hitler! All For Der Fuehrer!" is the Germanic warcry. Victorious Nazis returning to their air base. The pilots--women, let by Valkyrie. A German official chortling, "Vondebar! Den My AIRMAIDEN Squadron Iss A Success! We Shall Show Der World The Type Of Girlhood Germany Has!"

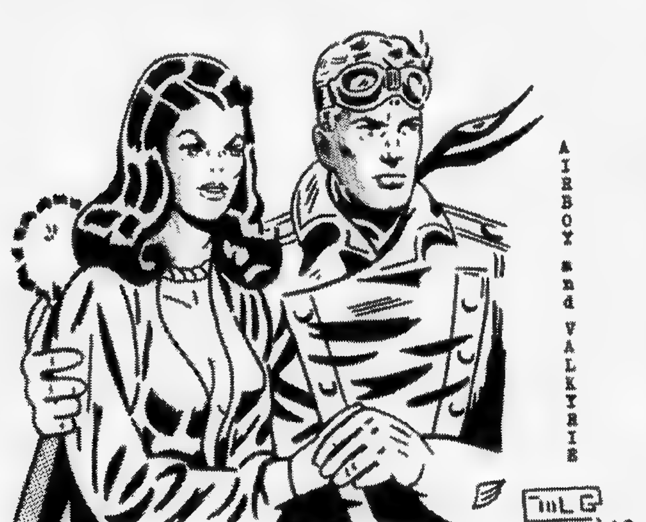
Valkyrie vowing, "I, Valkyrie, Shall Be The Great Master Of The Air! I Shall Face Airboy As The Cream Of German Youth!--We Shall See How Invincible He Is--Ha!" Her Nazi loyalty? Unquestionable--"My Life Belongs To The Fuehrer! He Is Our Sun!"

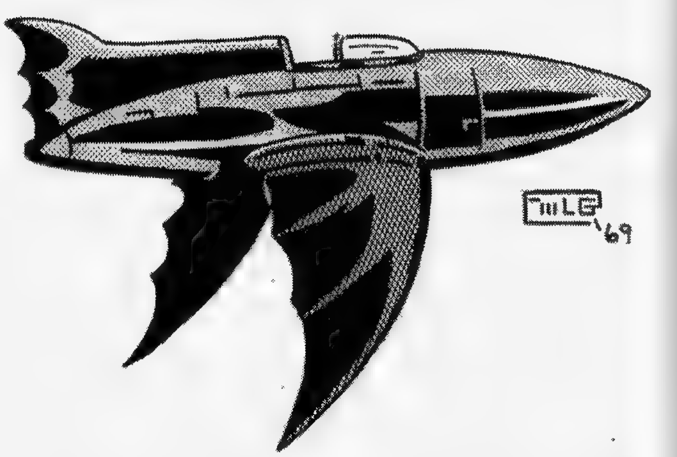
Above the bird-plane. Airboy has followed. A sky battle with Airboy winning only to loose. "I can't bring myself down to shooting a girl!"--a code that proves undoing and Airboy is a prisoner.

Valkyrie still means to prove her superority over Airboy. "I Shall Fly The Bird-Plane Against Airboy." A lashing at the hands of Valkyrie, but Airboy refuses to tell her the secrets of Birdie.

It is doubtful that readers were conscious of flagellation in the whipping scenes that continued for a number of panels. Reports of German atrocities and ill treatment of prisoners was common knowledge then even to the very young. The reader accepted it as fact. Similar scenes had been enacted in American movies and reported in news media.

So the reader continued with the story not bothered by any conscious Freudian overtones. Three Airmaidens, awed by Airboy's bravery, release him from his cell and hide him. For their disloyalty, a public lashing is ordered.





Valkyrie finds Airboy and tells him what has happened. With a kiss she seals her promise that given the secrets of Airboy she will see to it the Airmaidens are freed without punishment. Airboy agrees.

Now Valkyrie holds the upper hand. In her mind she planned all along to betray Airboy, have his plane for herself, and secure the release of the three Airmaidens all at the same time. But she is to find the German high officer equally as treacherous.

Given Airboy's hiding place, Herr Oberst declares, "They Shall Be Whipped In Front Of The Rest Of The Girls As An Example! We Must Have Discipline At All Costs! And Airboy Shall Be Shot As An EXTRA Attraction!"

An angered Valkyrie, one who with blazing eyes and firmed set mouth, avows, "So! This Is The Master Who Trained Me To Be A Good Nazi! Now I Can See The Evil Of My Tricky Ways! Well, While I Can Still Change, I Will!"

A feminine finger squeezes the trigger of a luger. A Nazi officer slumping in death, his hand clutching at a swastikaed flag hung on the wall. "Death To You! And The Other Nazi Ways Of Life!" is Valkyrie's snarl.

And now a new pilot at the control of the wonderful bird-plane. Below the execution courtyard where stands a defiant boy. Tied to separate posts, the three Airmaidens, about to be flogged. A German officer with hand upraised, thunders, "When I Drop My Hand, Commence! Ten Lashes Each For Der Girls! DEATH For Airboy! Ready!"

The signal never comes. It is lost in the blazing white head of bullets from a bat-winged craft, and Valkyrie's war song of "Die Butchers!" Airmaidens leaping to their planes rallying to Valkyrie's, "We've Been On The Wrong Side! You Saw What They Were Going To Do To Some Of Us--"

Airboy in Birdie with Valkyrie. Taxiing planes machine-gunning German soldiers trying to stop the escape. In the sky new battle, "With Nazi Brother Against Sister, The Fight Is All The More Bitter...But Airboy And The Airmaidens Steadily Grind Their Enemy Out Of The Sky..."

Airboy next met Valkyrie in the April-1944, Vol. 2, No.7, edition of Air Fighters Comics and this time Valkyrie and her Airmaidens were strictly on the side of the Allies, with the Germans plotting to bring about her death. But first a secret weapon must be brought into use against RAF bombing missions.

The weapon--"The Most Powerful Light Beam Ever Made By Man!" And it's first use brings about the death of one of Airboy's closest friends and his entire bombing mission. Airboy, alone, takes off in Birdie along the same route taken by the bombing mission.

Blinding light and Airboy is forced to land. Taken captor he is held prisoner with the survivors of the ill-fated bombing run. Valkyrie and the Airmaidens set out to find Airboy. Their's is a daylight raid to thwart the powerful light beam. Airfighters Comics recorded the takeoff as, "This Time AGAINST THE NAZIS!"

The mission of course was successful. Airboy and the other prisoners are rescued and the German forces defeated in a breath-taking aerial contest to conclude the story. Admiring British pilots comment:

"What A Knock-Out She Is--And She Fights And Flies Like A Demon!" And: "It'll Be A Lucky Bloke That Wins Valkyrie, Says I!" The favored 'lucky bloke' of the moment is none other than--AIRBOY!

NEXT ISSUE:

Learn of Misery... A villian that rivals even the Red Skull.

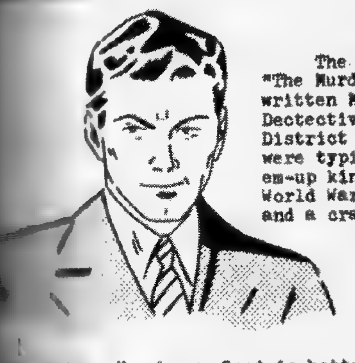
Thrill, as Tom Fagan relates the most frightening Airboy story of all...
THE INVASION OF THE BATS!

32 Years With.....

Article by:
Bob Cosgrove &
Martin Greim
assisted by
JERRY BAILS

When one thinks of the Golden Age of Comics, it brings to mind many fabulous characters, as well as a host of famous artists--Jack Kirby, Will Eisner, Reed Crandall, Joe Kubert, Lou Fine, just to name a few. However, should one try to recall a famous writer of that period, he is often hard pressed to come up with a name. Oh, there were a few - Joe Simon, Otto Binder, perhaps Bill Finger and Jerry Seigal, but the one name that most fans would remember best is that of **GARDNER FOX**--a man who has lasted in the field for thirty two- odd years.

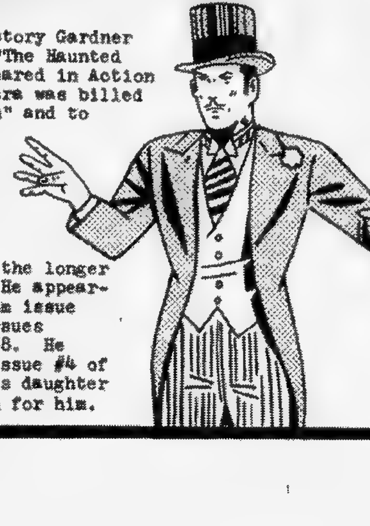
Although Fox thought he was going to be a lawyer, and even went to law school, fate knew otherwise. Even in his high-school days, Fox did dialogue and captions for a schoolmate buddy with cartoonist ambitions. Fox's first published story came about as an accident--while sick in bed with the flu, he wrote to pass the time, only to find that his work was published by [illegible] Medal. From there, it was only a short jump into the comics field, under the editorship of Vince Eldon, at the company destined to become famous as Superman-DC. His early works included such crime-adventure tales as Speed Saunders (an ace detective), Three Aces, Radio Squad, Cotton Carver (a Jungle Jim type character), an occasional Batman, and his own "brainchild" Steve Malone!



STEVE MALONE

The first Steve Malone story, "The Murdered Ambassador", was written March 20, 1938 for Dectective Comics. Malone was a District Attorney and his stories were typical of the action shoot-em-up kind prevalent in the pre-World War II era. He was tough and a crack shot with a gun. In those days (pre-comics code) there were no quams about shooting to kill or beating the daylights out of a bad guy. Fox's Malone stories, by today's standards, would seem a bit trite. You know, Good is better than Evil because it's [illegible]. However, one must remember, shooting in the streets and crime were front page stories in those days. It was quite often that the papers carried stories of someone being taken for a ride, or a daring bank robbery, so it was only natural for the comics to create crime busting heroes like [illegible].

On or about April 1, 1938, Gardner Fox began writing a story about a magician. A magician that would set the pace for many others of his kind to follow. This magician was known as Zatara!

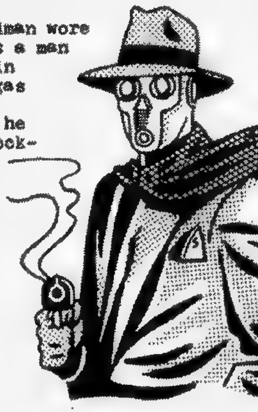


ZATARA

The first Zatara story Gardner Fox wrote was called, "The Haunted [illegible]". This story appeared in Action Comics #1 - 1938. Zatara was billed as "The Master Magician" and to [illegible] his magic he used a gimmick that was imitated by many others of his kind. When he used magic, he spoke what he wanted done - backwards.

Zatara was one of the longer running super heroes. He appeared in Action Comics from issue #1 to 132 and in two issues after that - 136 and 138. He was revived by Fox in issue #4 of [illegible] Comics, when his daughter [illegible] began to search for him.

From mystics to mystery: Gardner Fox, on April 17, 1939, wrote "Theft at the World's Fair" and launched the career of Sandman!



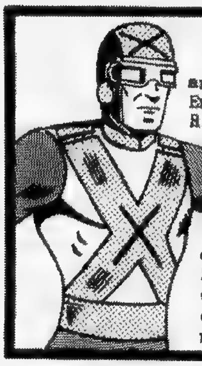
SANDMAN

The early Sandman wore no costume. He was a man of mystery. Clad in cloak and helmet, gas gun gripped in his strong right hand, he fought crime by knocking his foes unconscious with gas. The Sandman was wanted by the police, even though he never committed a crime. This was perhaps due to the gas-mask he wore to protect himself from his gas gun's fumes. His alter ego was Wesley Dodds, a rich playboy. However, when crime was committed, he became the dreaded Sandman!

Sandman appeared in Adventure Comics #40 thru 102, but with issue #69 his costume was changed to a tight fitting super hero one. Gone were the gas-mask and the gas gun and also his aura of mystery.

Besides using his gas gun, in issue #61 a weapon called the wirepoon gun was introduced. This gun fired a barbed shaft, with a line attached, and enabled Sandman to swing around much like Spiderman. Though the early Sandman had been replaced by Simon & Kirby's super hero one, when Fox revived Sandman in issue #46 of Justice League of America, it was the Sandman with the gas-mask he brought back. Only this time, for a weapon, he used a strange gun that turned molecules of sand, that he would toss, into anything that is derived from sand. (Such as glass, cement, etc.) So the revived version of Sandman actually used sand to fit his name.

One of Fox's lesser known heroes was a character called Captain X of the R.A.F.



CAPTAIN X of the R.A.F.

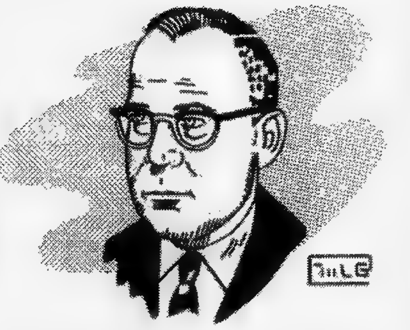
Captain X was in reality Buck Dare, an American reporter based in London, England. He fought along side England's R.A.F. during World War II. At a sheltered hillside, near Croyden Airport, Captain X's hidden underground chamber was located. Here, his plastic airplane, Jenny, was kept in order by his joke telling assistant - Stuffy. Captain X's plane was equipped with eight machine guns and a vibrating ray, which allowed the craft to hover. Captain X appeared in only a few issues of Star Spangled Comics (1 thru 7) so is not as well known as many early DC heroes.

From the time Gardner Fox began writing, many of his stories were based on the events of the day. In the case of the above mentioned Captain X, Fox had him fighting the Nazis before America got into the war. You might call Captain X an English costumed hero. Fox worked with many artists, in his early days. Craig Flessel, Mort Meskin, Sheldon Moldoff, Everett Hibbard and Joe Kubert, just to name a few. Some of these artists conveyed Fox's stories with brilliance, others did not.

Not all of Gardner's time was devoted to writing. He had a few hobbies too. He makes and collects miniature soldiers, (an old hobby of MLG's too, by the way.) specializing in ancient and medieval figures. He's also made a study of old weapons and all phases of history and archeology. This, of course, aides him in his writing.

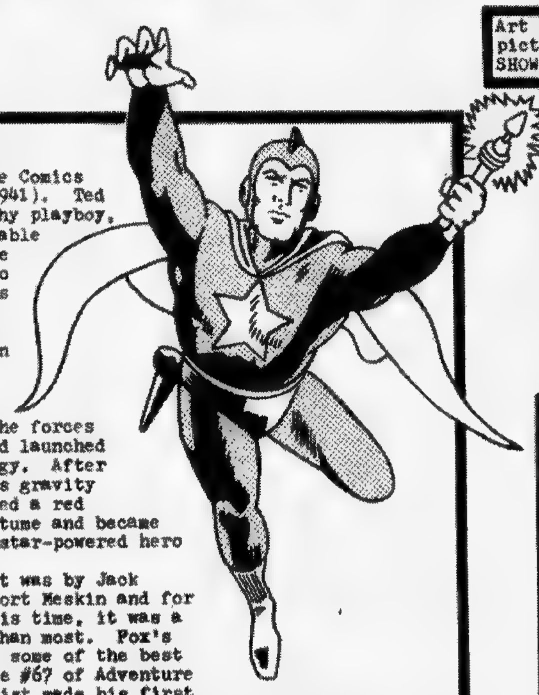
As the popularity of costumed heroes increased, Gardner Fox worked on more super powered heroes. Heroes such as the stellar powered hero Starman!

Gardner Fox



Art for Gardner Fox picture adapted from SHOWCASE #35.

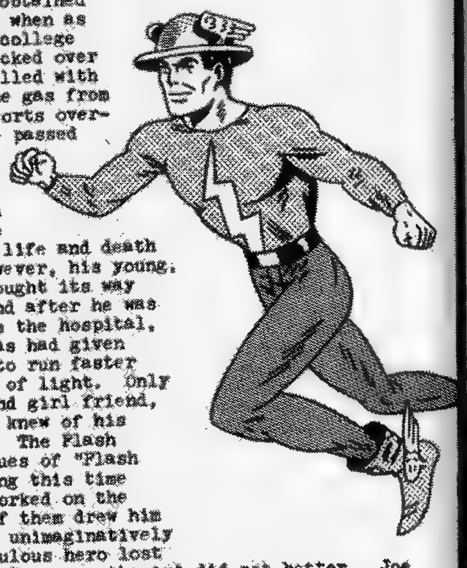
1940 was a great year for super heroes. Fox, teamed with the artistic talents of Everett Hibbard, created one of the most popular heroes of the day - The Flash. The Flash appeared in a comic bearing his own name "Flash Comics", but it could just as easily have been titled Fox Comics, for Gardner Fox wrote most of the magazine's stories. Besides the Flash, Fox wrote King Standish, (a hero in a top hat, mask and tux, who was a master of disguise.) Cliff Cornwal and fan favorite, for many years - Hawkman. Fox's creation proved so popular that the Flash received his own magazine "All Flash" in the summer of 1941.



STARMAN

Adventure Comics #61 (April, 1941). Ted knight, wealthy playboy, made a remarkable discovery. He found a way to use infra-rays from distant stars. Using these rays, in a device he called a gravity rod, he overcame the forces of gravity and launched bolts of energy. After perfecting his gravity rod, he devised a red and green costume and became known as the star-powered hero Starman!

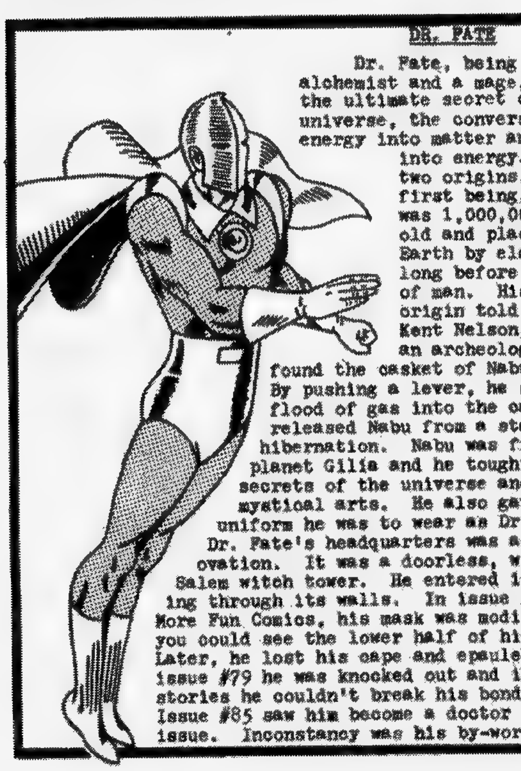
Early art was by Jack Burnley and Mort Meskin and for the art of this time, it was a step higher than most. Fox's villains were some of the best too. In issue #67 of Adventure Comics, The Mist made his first appearance. He was a character who, by using an inviso-solution, made objects coated with it disappear. He also wore a cloak that created the illusion of turning his body to mist. When Fox brought Starman back in issue #29 of the JLA he increased the powers of his gravity rod. Now, he had the rod drawing its increased power from the cosmic forces of the universe. His rod was now called the "cosmic rod".



THE FLASH

The Flash obtained his super speed when as Jay Garrick, a college student, he knocked over some retorts filled with hard water. The gas from the smashed retorts overcame him and he passed out. He was discovered the next morning and rushed to a hospital, where he lay between life and death for weeks. However, his young, healthy body fought its way back to life and after he was discharged from the hospital, he found the gas had given him the power to run faster than the speed of light. Only his lab aide and girl friend, Joan Williams, knew of his dual identity. The Flash lasted 104 issues of "Flash Comics". During this time many artists worked on the strip. Some of them drew him so crudely and unimaginatively that Fox's fabulous hero lost many readers. However, the art did get better. Joe Kubert illustrated an occassional story, as well as Carmine Infantino and Alex Toth. Fox's genius created some memorable Flash villians too. The Turtle, Ragdoll, The Thorn, and The Fiddler, just to name a few. It is a shame the art didn't always match the story.

In More Fun Comics, Gardner Fox wrote stories for perhaps the most colorful and confusing mystic of the Golden Age - Dr. Fate. I say confusing because, of all the early DC heroes, Dr. Fate had more changes in costume and story than any other.

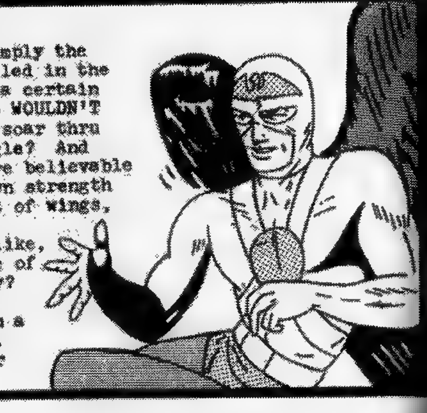


DR. FATE

Dr. Fate, being both an alchemist and a mage, learned the ultimate secret of the universe, the conversion of energy into matter and matter into energy. He had two origins. The first being, that he was 1,000,000 years old and placed on Earth by elder gods, long before the time of man. His second origin told of how Kent Nelson, son of an archeologist, found the casket of Nabu the Wise. By pushing a lever, he sent a flood of gas into the casket and released Nabu from a state of hibernation. Nabu was from the planet Gilia and he tought Kent the secrets of the universe and lost mystical arts. He also gave him a uniform he was to wear as Dr. Fate.

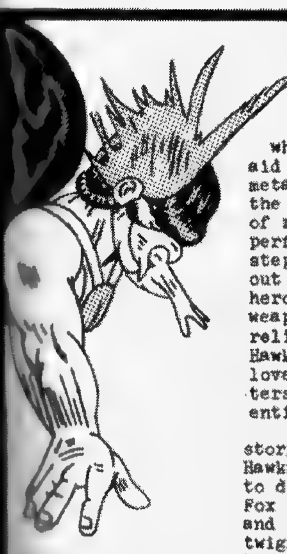
Dr. Fate's headquarters was a comic inovation. It was a doorless, windowless, Salem witch tower. He entered it, by walking through its walls. In issue #72 of More Fun Comics, his mask was modified so you could see the lower half of his face. Later, he lost his cape and epaulets. In issue #79 he was knocked out and in later stories he couldn't break his bonds or fly. Issue #85 saw him become a doctor in one issue. Inconstancy was his by-word.

As far as fandom is concerned, such favorites as The Flash and Green Lantern might be okay, but their real hero was Hawkman. It was Hawkman that had the older fans screaming "REVIVAL"--Hawkman that they oohed and ahhed over after his appearance in Brave and Bold--Hawkman they fought for until, through the goodness of DC editor Julie Schwarts, he was granted his own magazine. Why? What charm did this character possess?



HAWKMAN

Hawkman, or simply the Hawk, as he was called in the forties, possessed a certain natural charm. Who WOULDN'T want to be able to soar thru the air like an eagle? And wasn't it a bit more believable to fly with your own strength and an imposing set of wings, than to float thru the sky, Superman like, in blatant defiance of the laws of gravity? Not only that, but Fox imbued him with a certain uniqueness. Sure, he was Carter



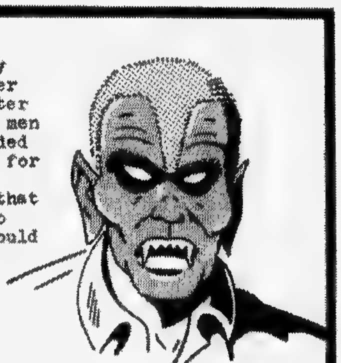
Hall, a wealthy Bruce Wayne imitation, but more importantly, he was the reincarnation of a former Egyptian warrior who had fought evil in the time of the Pharoahs, who flew thru the skys with the aid of the anti-gravity "ninth metal". At this time, when only the Fawcett line provided a bit of relief from the well-nigh perfect speciman of manhood who stepped into a laboratory and came out a superman, this re-incarnated hero who battled crime with weapons of the past was a welcome relief. Somehow, Fox had created Hawkman with perhaps a bit more love than with his other characters, and it showed, thruout his entire life.

Fox once told the following story about the creation of Hawkman. One day, while trying to dream up a new super hero, Fox chanced to look out a window and observed a bird collecting twigs for its nest. The bird would swoop down, pick up a twig, then fly away. Fox thought to himself, "Wouldn't it be great if that bird was a lawman and the twig a crook." So as simply as that, a legendary hero was born. This story is a prime example of the tremendous imagination of this writer.

When Fox revived Hawkman, in Brave and Bold #34, depressingly, he was not reincarnated, but merely another visitor from space. So original was Fox's handling of this old concept, however, that it took on a fresh look--new angles were added. Hawkman was married, and in his civillian identity, harrassed by a pretty museum worker who would have liked nothing better than to wreck up his marriage. Sadly, when Murphy Anderson took over the art, Fox's imagination seemed to fail. Mavis Trent, Hawkgirl's rival, was forgotten, and stories took on a depressingly gimmicky-over- plotted outlook. It was a shame, really. Hawkman was Fox's pet.

Not all of Gardner Fox's work was for DC. Beginning in January, 1940, under the pen name of Michael Blake, he began writing the first of 21 adventures for the Columbia Comic Corp. These adventures were about a most unusual hero named - The Face!

THE FACE



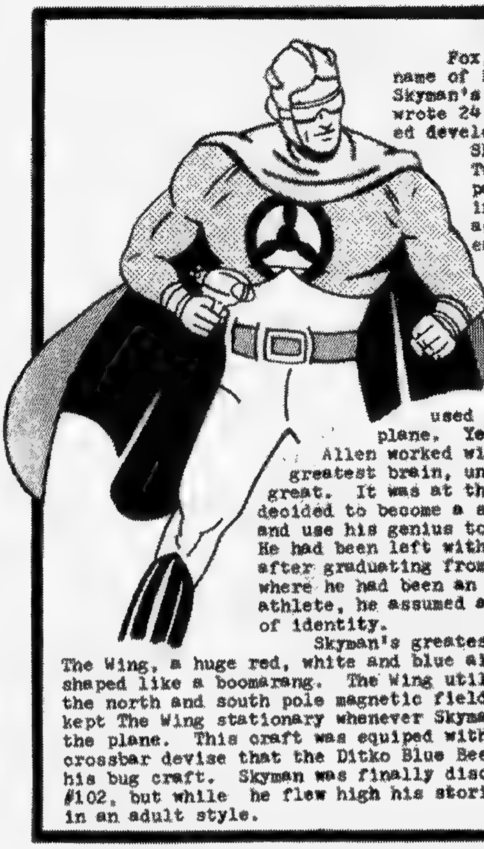
The Face was in reality Tony Trent, a radio announcer and news correspondent. After witnessing a murder, by two men in police uniforms, he decided to have a special mask made for himself, at a mask shop. A grotesque green faced mask that fitted over his head, yet so thin and flexible that it could easily be rolled up to a small pocket size, was the end result. Tony was going to use this mask to frighten criminals and to fight crime. While he was trying the mask on, the two men who had committed the murder he had seen earlier, came in. It seems they had rented police uniforms, to disguise themselves, and were now returning to kill the costume shop owner. The Face appeared before the criminals, paralyzed them with fright and immediately put them out of commission. However, just as the police arrived, the shop owner was killed by a mysterious hooded figure. Inspector Biggs sees The Face and markes him as the murderer. Throughout The Face's career, Biggs was always after him.

In many Face stories the emphasis was on the Face's [illegible], but in later stories the only time the Face was seen was in flashback sequences. The action now focused on Tony Trent. The Face had some fabulous art by Mart Bailey and story wise some of the best ever written. The stories were written on a more mature level and way ahead of their time.

From time to time Fox would try his hand at a weird tale or science-fiction story for pulp magazines. He found that this change of pace kept him from going stale. In the early 1950's he did his first paperback book, a historical novel called "The Borgia Blade". Fox has had over thirty novels published, some under his own name (like "Warrior of Llarn"), some under his six pen names.

May of 1940 saw Gardner Fox, under the editorship of Vincent Sullivan and teamed with the artistic talents of Ogden Whitney, turn out the leading character in the Columbia Comics line....Skyman!

SKYMAN

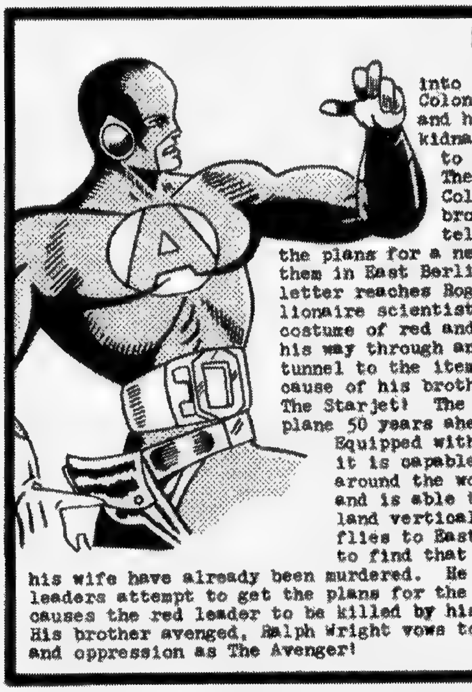


Fox, under the pen name of Paul Dean, was Skyman's first writer. He wrote 24 stories and helped develop the character. Skyman was Allen Turner, whose parents were killed in an airplane accident, in his early teens. Allen was taken in by his uncle, Peter Turner, a great scientist, who explained his parents death was caused by faulty material used in his father's plane. Year after year, Allen worked with America's greatest brain, until he too became great. It was at this point Allen decided to become a scientist-policeman and use his genius to overcome evil. He had been left with a fortune and after graduating from Harnel College, where he had been an all-around athlete, he assumed a Bruce Wayne type of identity.

Skyman's greatest invention was The Wing, a huge red, white and blue aircraft that was shaped like a boomarang. The Wing utilized the power of the north and south pole magnetic fields. These fields kept The Wing stationary whenever Skyman wanted to leave the plane. This craft was equiped with the same type of crossbar devise that the Ditko Blue Beetle used to leave his bug craft. Skyman was finally discontinued in issue #102, but while he flew high his stories were presented in an adult style.

Fox also worked on some western characters...Tim Holt and Straight Arrow. These characters were put out by a company called ME (the same people who published the original Ghost Rider). Six years after Skyman was discontinued Gardner Fox created a hero copied after him....The Avenger!

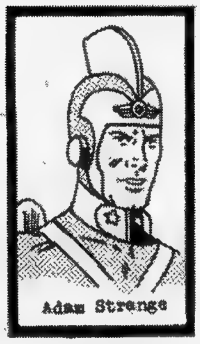
THE AVENGER



The Avenger came into being when Colonel Ralph Wright and his wife were kidnapped and forced to go to East Berlin. The Reds forced the Colonel to write his brother, Roger, and tell him to deliver the plans for a new airplane to them in East Berlin. When the letter reaches Roger Wright, millionaire scientist, he dons a costume of red and white and makes his way through an underground tunnel to the item that is the cause of his brothers kidnaping... The Starjet! The Starjet is a plane 50 years ahead of its time. Equipped with an atomic motor, it is capable of flying around the world endlessly and is able to take off and land vertically. The Avenger flies to East Berlin, only to find that his brother and his wife have already been murdered. He foils the red leaders attempt to get the plans for the Starjet which causes the red leader to be killed by his superiors. His brother avenged, Ralph Wright vows to prevent crime and oppression as The Avenger!

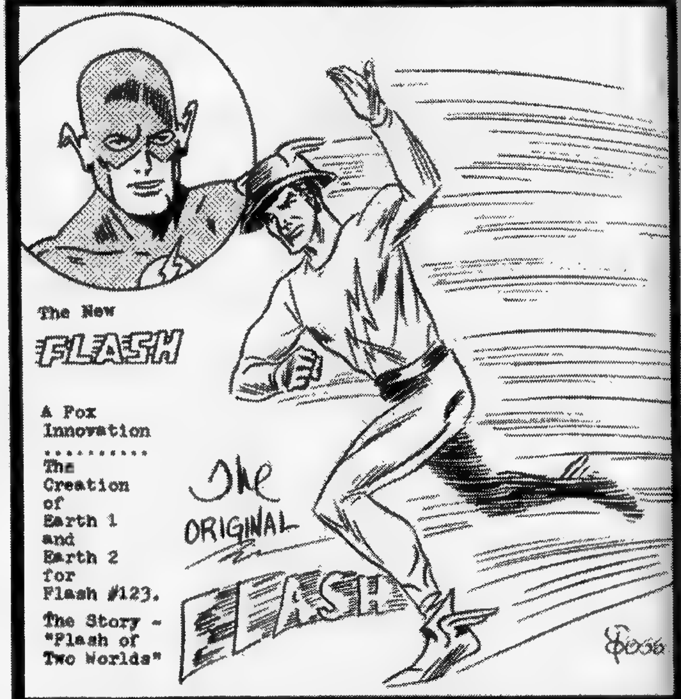
While Fox worked for ME he wrote nearly every story they published. This was primarily because his life long friend Vincent Sullivan was ME's editor.

After the "black friday" of the comic book, when the super-hero seemed gone for good, the comics switched to horror, and, after the code came in, science fiction. Fox did some nice work in this period, but DC plots, hampered by the code, too often revolved around some sort of gimmick, and in NO case came thru with the sock ending and moral of the EC comics. Likewise, the art, adequete as it was, was hopelessly outclassed by EC's pre-code work. Throughout this time Fox was writing more paperbacks, even as he does today. The same holds true of them, tho' they are more enjoyable than the comic work - good adventure and excitement, not profound meaning.


Adam Strange

Ironically, this s-f trend led, in 1958, to the creation of the s-f hero, ADAM STRANGE , who travelled from Earth to the planet Rann to fight the threats to this adopted planet. At first by Mike Sekowsky but soon by Carmine Infantino, Strange fast became the s-f hero pars excellance. What Flash Gordon was to the newspaper, Strange was to the comic book. Like Flash, Strange's adventures revealled a whole culture, a civilization. Like Flash, Strange was superbly illustrated, although not quite as well. Strange enjoyed the inks of Murphy Anderson, unquestionably the best inker DC enjoyed, with the possible exception of Wally Wood, and voted many times the best inker in comic books.

By the time Strange faded into limbo, super-heroes and Marvel Comics were IN, and Fox was churning out fine stories for many of them. There was Batman, by Infantino; the Atom, another revamped revival, by Gil Kane, the Justice League, by Sekowsky, and an occasional Green Lantern, also by the talented Gil Kane. Most of all however, there was The Flash, respected by fans and competitors as one of the finest mags on the stands. John Broome wrote many tales, but the ones Fox wrote were among the scarlet speedster's very best. One Alley Award Winner was entitled "Flash of Two Worlds." This story told of how The Flash accidently vibrated himself through a dimensional barrier into the world of the Golden Age Flash. This event was explained thusly: "Two objects can occupy the same space and time if they vibrate at different speeds. Obviously, both earths developed similar customs and heroes". The present day Flash learned of the other one because he had read of him, as a fictional character, in a magazine called "Flash Comics". It was explained that Gardner Fox had written about the Golden Age Flash after his adventures had come to him in his dreams. When Fox went to sleep, his mind became "Tuned In" on the vibratory earth. This Earth 1 and Earth 2 idea, as it was called, was a stroke of genius on Fox's part, for it left the door open for future Golden Age - present day adventures between super-heroes.



To wind up this Gardner Fox feature, no two magazines are more worthy of discussion than All Star Comics - Justice Society of America and todays Justice League of America.

J.S.A. - J.L.A.

The Flash

Hawkman

Superman

Batman

While the enthusiastic majority might have acclaimed Hawkman king, in the Golden Age, many favored other Fox-scripted characters: The Flash--Starman--Dr. Fate--The Sandman. What matter? One could find all his favorites in All Star Comics, where the world's most colorful heroes had banded together to fight crime and injustice as...**THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA!** The Justice Society, the very name struck terror into the hearts of criminals, for at one time or another, Superman, Batman, Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkman, Spectre, Atom, Sandman, Dr. Fate, Hourman, Starman, Dr. Mid-Nite, Wonder Woman, Wildcat, Mr. Terrific, Red Tornado, Johnny Thunder and the beautiful Black Canary battled their way across the pages of All Star. No less impressive were the artists that graced these pages--Kubert, Toth, Infantino, Kirby--All Star had them all, and far too many lesser lights as well.

The Idea of the Justice Society of America was conceived and developed in 1940 by three men...M. C. Gaines, publisher and managing editor; Sheldon Mayer, editor; and Gardner F. Fox, writer. Fox wrote the first Justice Society story in All Star Comics #3 and everyone following-up until issue #38. His basic pattern in these storys, was to have each member individually featured in different chapters, coming together as a team only in the introduction and conclusion. In most cases, each chapter was drawn by a different artist. In issue #38 Fox introduced a more flexible format. The members were now featured in two or three man teams and only occasionally soloed.

In the March, 1960 issue of Brave and the Bold (#28), Fox and his cohorts attempted to recapture the bygone glory of the JSA. In some cases, he was successful. The early Brave and Bold stories, some of the first JLA epics in their own magazine, and a few of the JSA-JLA teamups, made possible by the introduction of "Earth Two" in the Flash series, ranked as examples of Fox at his best. But Sekowsky's early fine art was beginning a rapid decline, even with the third JLA story, "The Case of the Stolen Super Powers." Hampered by lack of space and an ever increasing mob of super-heroes, Fox seemed to go stale. Some of the stories rank as the poorest put out by DC in the era. The fault was most certainly not Fox's, but it is true nonetheless.

Begining with issue #25 of the Justice League of America, the powers-to-be at DC realized the JLA was too overcrowded to write good stories for and began featuring fewer members. Fox, once again, began turning out great material. To what heights this fine author will soar in the future are uncertain, but you can be sure of one thing: As long as fandom exists, the name Gardner Fox will be spoken of with respect and admiration.

Green Lantern

The Flash

The Atom

Green Lantern

Dr. Mid-Nite

Aquaman

Johnny Thunder

Wonder Woman

J'onn J'onzz

Wonder Woman

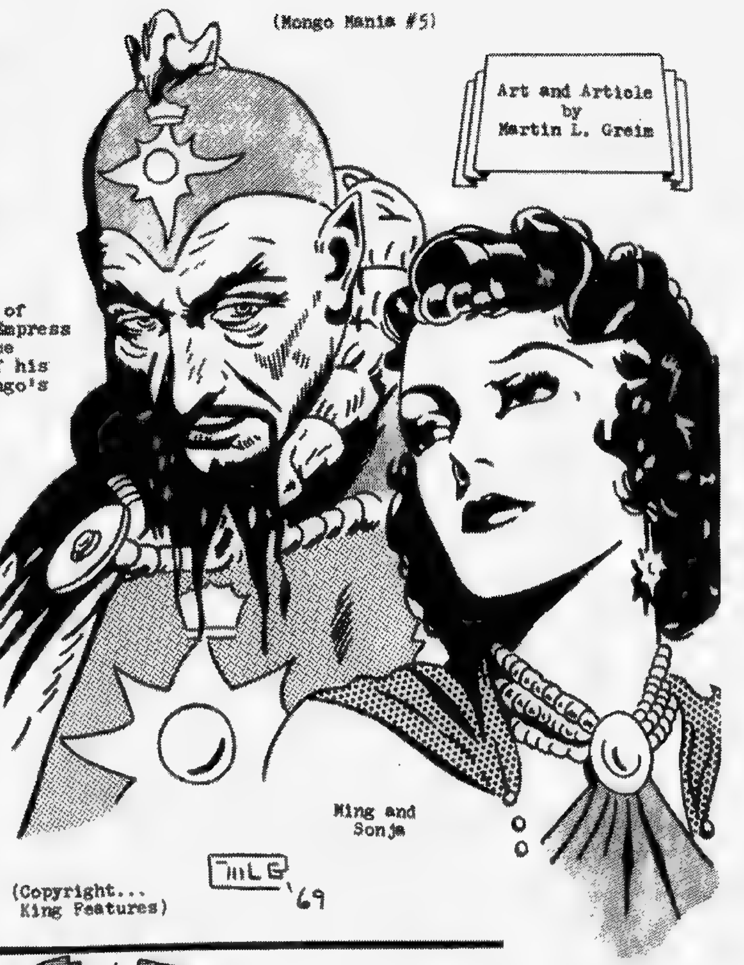
Layouts by:
Bob Cosgrove

Art by:
Martin L. Greim
Ronn Foss

Empress of Mongo

(Mongo Mania #5)

Art and Article
by
Martin L. Greim



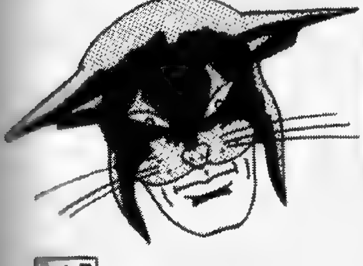
Ming and
Sonja

(Copyright...
King Features)

For a short time, in the reign of Ming the Merciless, he had an Empress rule at his side. This all came about, when Ming and a party of his elite guards were burying a contender to his throne on Mongo's island of Tombs. As Ming and his guards returned to the royal barge, they were attacked by Flash Gordon and his freemen, who were taking refuge on the island. After a fierce battle Flash overcame Ming and took him prisoner. Now, at last, Mongo had a chance to be free. Ming was put in a cell, while Flash met with his generals to make terms for freeing Mongo.

While back at Ming's cell a traitorous girl named Sonja had wormed her way past Ming's guard to give Ming a proposition. "I hate Flash Gordon!" Sonja told Ming. "If you make me your Empress, I'll help you escape." Ming agreed and seconds later Sonja had knifed Ming's guard and freed him. Ming and Sonja then made good their escape on a launch and returned to Mingo City. Flash Gordon and his men, after finding that Ming had escaped, quickly left their island hide out. Flash knew it would only be a short time before Ming's army would be sent against them.

Meanwhile true to his word, Ming rewarded Sonja's treachery by marrying her and crowning her Empress of all Mongo. Ming then rose from his throne and gave a command. "I've kept my promise to make her Empress. Now take the rebel girl to the dungeons and execute her at once!" And so, such was the reward for the treacherous "Empress of Mongo". The ceremony was over. Ming strode down echoing hallways to his study. The great palace chimes started a mournful tolling. "Ha, the bells!" A sneer twisted on Ming's lips. "The Empress is dead! Would it were Flash Gordon instead!"



WILDCAT AND MR. TERRIFIC

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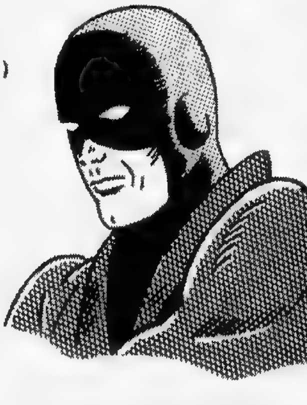


THE DAYS OF THE J.S.A.
#1

by

John Lawrence

Wildcat, was in reality, Ted Grant, a heavyweight fighter. Wildcat came into being, when Ted Grant was wrongly accused of murdering the heavyweight champ by means of a needle placed in his glove. Actually the needle had been placed there by his manager. He escaped the police when the squad car he was being taken away in was wrecked. Being a fugitive, he adopted a "Wildcat" costume and went after his former manager and soon brought him to justice. Ted then decided to keep his "Wildcat" identity and fight crime and injustice.

Wildcat's connection with the Justice Society of America was a minor one. In "All Star Comics" #24 he was an invited guest; helping the JSA prove to a young American (Dick Amber) the warlike ways of Germany. Green Lantern and The Flash became active members again, in this issue, so Wildcat never made it as a permanent member. However, in issue #27 of "All Star Comics", he returned again. This time he took The Atom's place (for this issue only) as the JSA enlisted handicapped youngsters in their fight against crime. In this story, Wildcat enlisted the help of a deaf boy, who could read lips, to find out what a gang of criminals were up to. With the youngsters help, he soon rounded the gang up. Wildcat never appeared with the JSA again, until issue #46 of The Justice League of America, when the Justice Society teamed up with the Justice League.

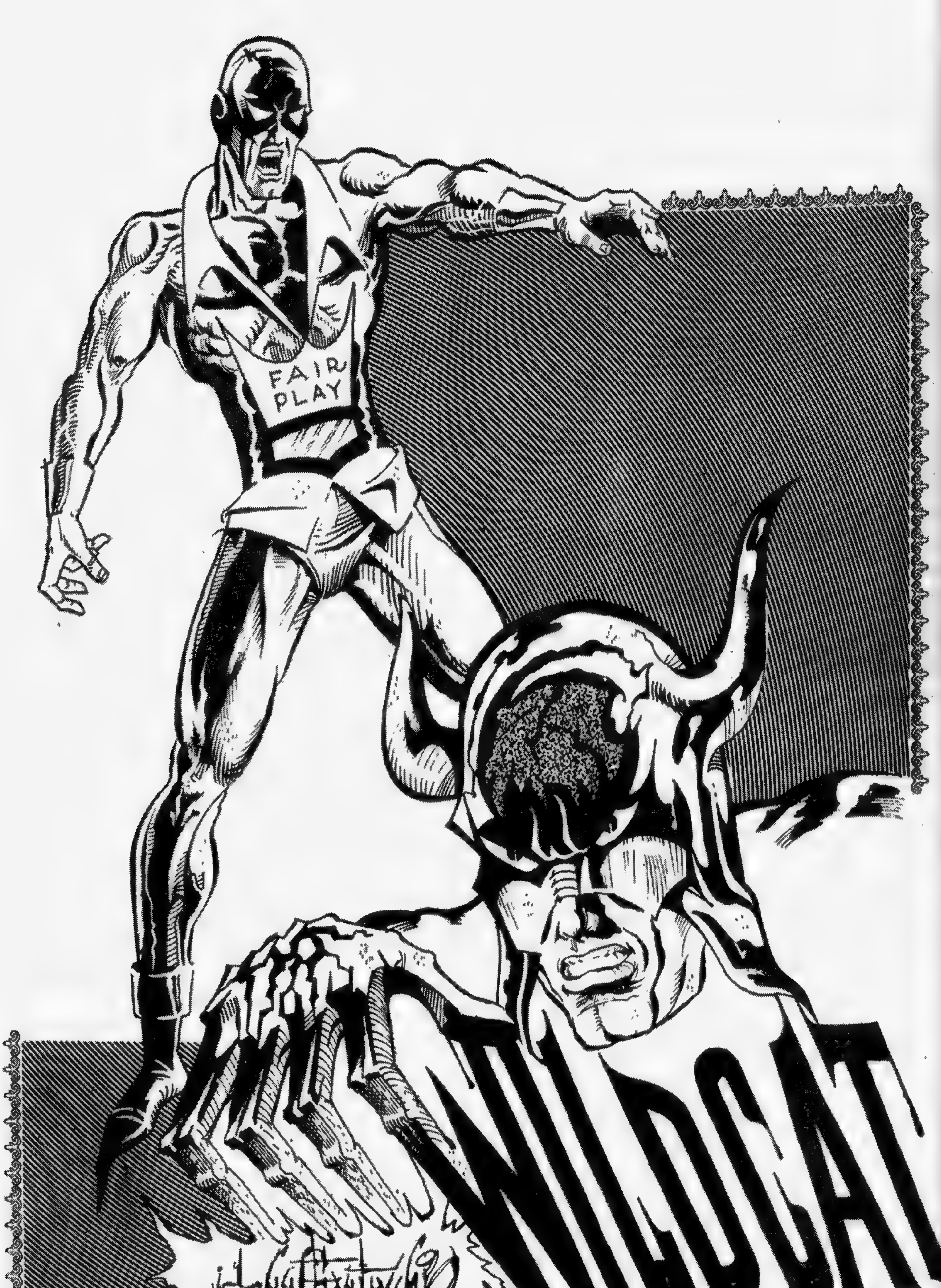
Mr. Terrific, in reality, was Terry Sloan a financial wizard. His origin, though a dull one, is as follows. Terry Sloan was quite a remarkable boy. When he was born, it was obvious that he had exceptional talent. His mind and body were advanced far beyond those of the other children of his age. He became a child prodigy at the age of 10. As he grew older, he discovered that there was no art, science, or sport that he wasn't an expert at. He decided to use his talents to fight crime and after designing a costume, became Mr. Terrific.

Mr. Terrific's connection with The Justice Society was even less than Wildcat's. He appeared only in "All Star Comics" #24 (the same issue as Wildcat) to prove to Dick Amber Germany's war-like tendencies. He, as well as the rest of the JSA, did this by going back in time - aided by a fairy named Conscience.

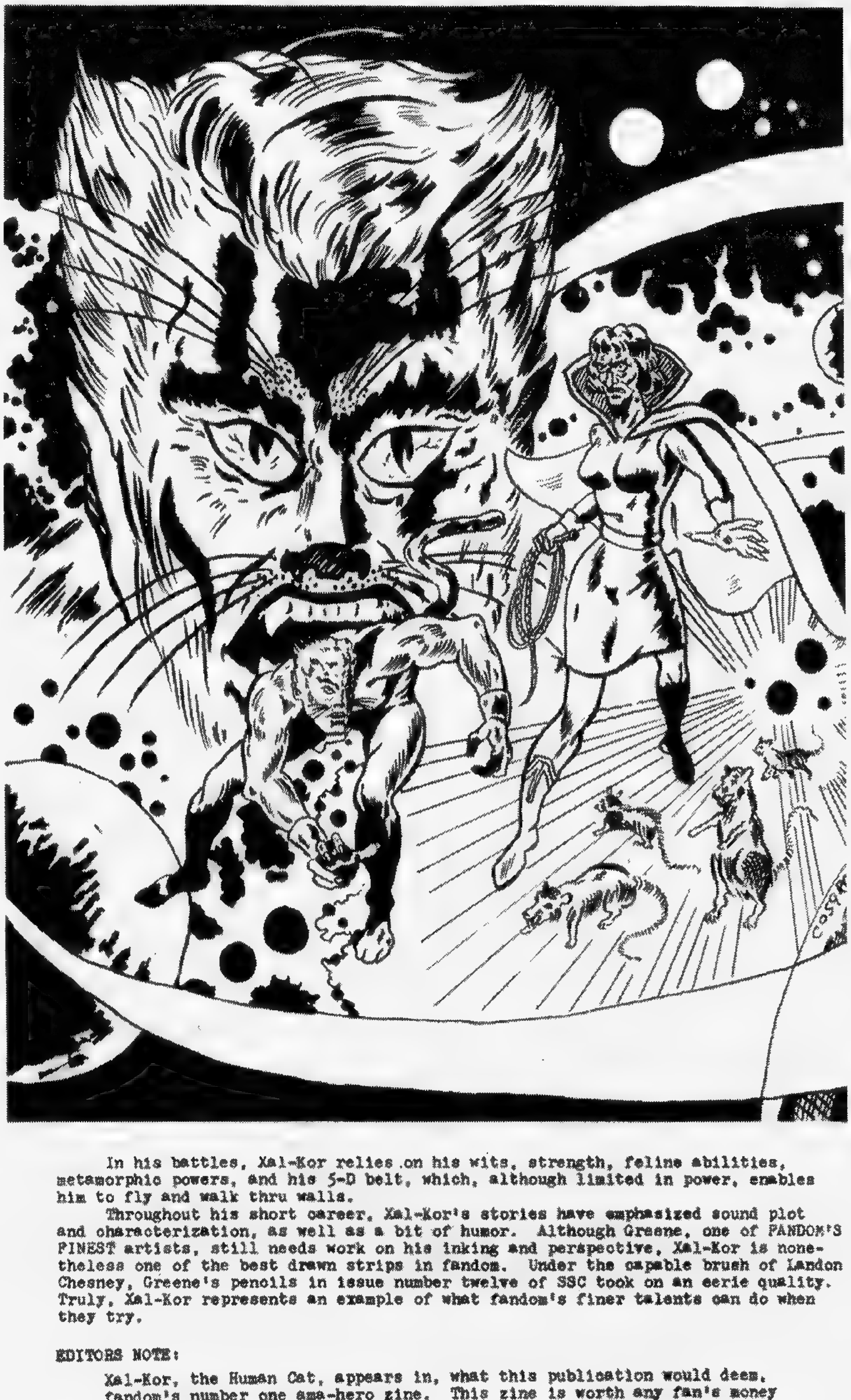
Until issue #37 of The Justice League of America, he never appeared with the JSA again.

Perhaps the reason for both Wildcat and Mr. Terrific appearing when they did is; at this time many heroes were being dropped and since both of the stories they appeared in were released out of sequence (DC for some reason, released patriotic and moral stories before their due date) perhaps DC was seriously thinking of including them as regular members.

(*Ed.Note...Both Wildcat and Mr. Terrific appeared in their own stories, in Sensation Comics.


FAIR PLAY
WILDCAT

FANDOM'S FINEST



Art & Article
by
BOB COSGROVE

(Featuring - Xal-Kor, the Human Cat)

Personal involvement often means the difference between greatness and mediocrity. Martin Greim and myself are personally involved with our characters, Space Guardian and The Defender. Our own involvement makes us enjoy them more than any other characters. We like to think that our involvement and enjoyment shows up in the final product. In Fandom, there is too much reliance on the pro way of doing things and not enough on creativity. I'm not knocking professionalism, but simply saying that the most professional job is worth little if it is a simple rewrite of pro efforts. One fan who consistantly comes up with a storyline as interesting as any pro comic is Grass Green, writer-artist of Xal-Kor, the Human Cat.

Xal-Kor is a cat-man of superhuman strength and intelligence. The lone emissary of the planet Felis, the fantastic feline has traveled from the fourth dimension into the third, landing on earth to stave off the Rodentite menace. Although Earth people are alarmed at the very sight of him, he has embarked upon the task of "trying to find and counter any menacing, retaliatory operations the rat people might contrive in their un-ending pursuit of total dimensional-universal DOMINATION!" For, if earth is enslaved and all the people are forced to fight in the Rodentite ARMY, Felis and all the other planets of Universe VI in the 4th dimension would fall prey to the overwhelming odds, as the rat people would have utter, complete SURPRISE on their side!!"

To aid him in this awesome task, our hero has taken the guise (aided and abetted by metamorphic powers) of one Colin Chambers, photographer for the Linton Daily news. Unbeknownst to him, his secretary, Ann Rhoden, is in reality his arch-foe, RODA, Queen of the Rodentites. After his origin in SSC #3, the intrepid Xal-Kor took time out to battle one Z.Z. Grogan in SSC #7. With SSC #8, Xal-Kor highlighted a beautifully drawn cover by Richard Green. On the inside of the magazine, he encountered "Operation Big Move," and managed to foil a Rodentite attempt to return in force to Universe VI, as well as to escape from the clutches of Queen Roda.

In issue #9, Colin's editor, Ed Haines, chanced across the menace of the Rodentite movement. When Haines revealed the menace to the skeptical public, he found himself marked for death...'till Colin, in his Feline alter-Ego, came to the rescue.

Irony was the password for "Xal-Kor to the Rescue," SSC #10's Green epic. A group of communists decided to capture the catman and brainwash him into becoming a drugged servant of the reds. Knowing that Colin Chambers had been present at most of the Human Cat's appearances, and unable to directly obtain him for bait, they first secured ANOTHER hostage. One Ann Rhoden. Tho' both Catman and Ratwoman saw plenty of action, each remained unaware of the others identity.

In the latest Xal-Kor epic, a booklengther, Xal-Kor clashed with "The Invincible Vole," a rat agent given super powers with the aid of a stolen invention. Fortunatly, the inventor, [illegible] Rawe, used a duplicate machine on Xal-Kor.

In his battles, Xal-Kor relies on his wits, strength, feline abilities, metamorphic powers, and his 5-D belt, which, although limited in power, enables him to fly and walk thru walls.

Throughout his short career, Xal-Kor's stories have emphasized sound plot and characterization, as well as a bit of humor. Although Greene, one of FANDOM'S FINEST artists, still needs work on his inking and perspective, Xal-Kor is nonetheless one of the best drawn strips in fandom. Under the capable brush of Landon Chesney, Greene's pencils in issue number twelve of SSC took on an eerie quality. Truly, Xal-Kor represents an example of what fandom's finer talents can do when they try.

EDITORS NOTE:

Xal-Kor, the Human Cat, appears in, what this publication would deem, fandom's number one ama-hero zine. This zine is worth any fan's money and we highly recomend that you buy:

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LETTERS

Supplement to
COMIC CRUSADER #5

J.SCOTT STEWART -Just finished Comic Crusader #4. You have a great zine on your hands.

Fantucchio's covera work was not up to his usual. The layout of the cover and the border designs made up for it, though. Was happy to see the photo of John & Mary F., too.

Tom Fagan's article was outstanding. Fagan's always are. In a couple of places, however, either his spelling or your typing could use some checking.

The Ditko art was good. Looked more like an ad than a spot, for some reason.

Since, in my calculated opinion, Steranko is the greatest illustrator in the medium today, his art and con speeech groovd me right out of my skull. What does one say about an artist like that?

The Ghost Patrol, City In The Sky, and Fandom's Finest wr all good. They weren't spectacular but they went down easy.

The Defender deserves recognition.Wish it didn't look quite so much like Wood.

I think you are making a mistake adding more offset if it means incorporating the ditto supplment. The little blue pull-out gave the mag a different kind of charm. Also it keps the price down and I always appreciate that!

I've rambled enough. Thanks for an excellent Magazine.

AS YOU CAN SEE BY THIS ISSUE, YOU HAVEN'T LOST THE LITTLE BLUE PULL-OUT. IT'S LONG BN A POLICY OF MINE NOT TO WASTE OFFSET SPACE ON A LETTER COLUMN. AS FOR MY ART LOOKING LIKE WOOD'S... I SPEND THE MOST TIME PER ISSUE GETTING IT TO LOOK THAT WAY. MY OWN STYLE IS MUCH LIKE HIS, SO I STRIVE TO MAKE IT LOOK MORE LIKE HIS EACH ISSUE. WHEN YOU TYPE AS MANY PAGES AS I DO, YOU'RE BOUND TO MAKE A MISTAKE OR TWO, OR THREE, OR FOUR- ETC.

LINCOLN YACO - Comic Crusader #4 was, as usual, perfect. The Defender, like wine and old men, improves with age. The contributions were enjoyable. I hate to be critical, but the format is beginning to get slightly boring. Not that the quality of the material is poor. It's the best to be found. It's just that I think you should give and ask for opinions. Examples: what do you think of National's new mags, Dick Giordano, Neal Adams, the new Aquaman, Stan Lee's Captain Marvel, Spectacular Spider-Man, Doc Doom getting a feature appearance in "Marvel Superheroes", etc. Again, don't get me wrong, I still maintain my stand that yours is the best zine in the U.S..

LINC, COMIC CRUSADER IS NOT AN OPINION ZINE. IT IS A ZINE TO GIVE INFORMATION AND FURTHER THE ENJOYMENT OF COMIC READING. I DON'T SEE HOW MY OPINION ON YOUR ABOVE MENTIONED QUESTIONS IS GOING TO FURTHER COMIC READING.

J. WILLIAM HANLEY - C.C. #4 from front cover all the way through to "Red Ryder" on the back was one fine fanzine. Fantucchio's cover and illos were extremely well done. Of the three, the Vulture was the best. It really knocked me out. You outdid yourself this ish, Martin. You managed to get that fine work from Fantucchio as well as a one-shot of Ditko's "Mr. A", and to top it all off you had a fine full pager by Jim Steranko. The high point for me however, was Tom Fagan's great Airboy feature. As you said, he's one of fandom's greatest writers, and that one article alone proved it. More of the same is forthcoming, I hope. Your own Defender strip continues to be a fine piece of material and I'm breathlessly looking forward to Steranko's version. Well, I don't want to take up too much more of your time, so I'll close by telling you that you did a terrific job in putting out C.C. #4! Keep it up.

GLAD TO HEAR YOU LIKED TOM'S ARTICLE. HOPE YOU LIKE PART 2 IN THIS ISSUE.

DENNIS D. DEPRENN - Just a few lines to tell you how much I enjoyed Comic Crusader #4. The John G. Fantucchio cover was terrific, as was the inside art and photos of/by him.
The Airboy write-up was fairly good, but the art was really good. Tom Fagan strikes me as a good writer, and I hope to see him as well as Bob Cosgrove and you do more stories in the future.

The Mr. A feature was one of the better parts of the zine, even though it was too short. It did, however, inspire me to order Wood's WITZEND.

City in the Sky was OK, but I didn't really care for the Ghost Patrol article. Maybe you can get an article on the Golden Age Daredevil?

The Defender was good as usual, but please try not to copy Wood so much. The Defender is better as a character, but Space Guardian is better as a strip.

The highlight of the book for me was the Steranko photos/art/article. I just received a card for Christmas from him a few days ago. He's one of my favorites.

STERANKO'S XMAS CARD, WITH ALL THE SHIELD CHARACTERS, CERTAINLY MADE MY CHRISTMAS, TOO!

THE
COLLECTOR

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"Unsung Heroes" by Doug Fratz
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Art by Martin L. Greim
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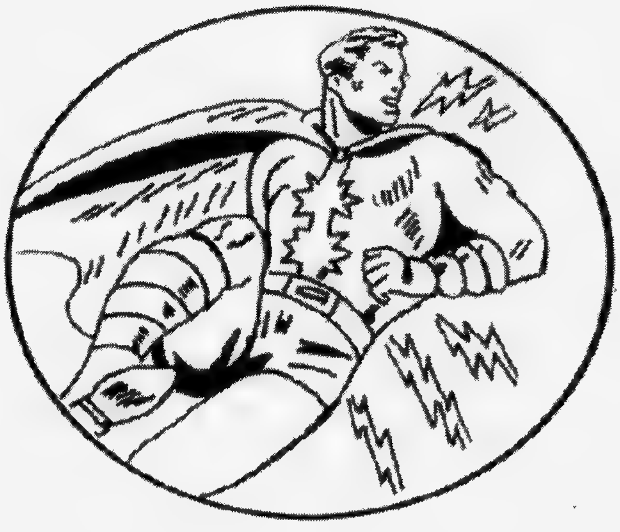


MAGNO THE MAGNETIC MAN

Ace Pub's greatest hero. Magno started in Super Mystery #1, June 1940 and ran for about 30 issues. Magno was able to magnetize himself to any metal object even if it was miles away. He was the master of magnetism. In issue #4 he was joined by a young ally named Davy. He also poseesd the power of magnetism.

MARK BARKLAY - Comic Crusader #4 was probably your best issue yet. Fantucchio's cover was excellent. His Vutlure was even better. The Airboy article was good, but since Comic Crusader is a zine for "students of comuc art", does an article like this really belong in CC? The art for it was good also. Mr. A was good, but then it was Ditko, who's always good, if not great. The Steranko article was excellent, as was Steranko's full page Fury. But hen, that is Steranko. Incidentally, I did not really believe that CC was being published non-profit until I saw that you had paid sixty-five dollars for an hour of Steranko's time. Now I believe you. Steve Fritz article was all right, and he seems to be a good artist from what I saw. Fantucchio's Spectre was great. City in the Sky was pretty good. The Defender was very good, as usual. Ghost Patrol was all right, but nothing spectacular. Cosgrove's Deadman was another good drawing, as was your Red Ryder. One thing I didn't like was that the letters were separate from the rest of the mag. Why not staple it in with the rest of CC? It looks much better and keps the whole mag together. By the way I'm glad that you are now mailing in envelopes.

WHEN I SAY THAT THIS ZINE IS FOR THE STUDENTS OF COMIC ART, IT IS MEANT AS A GENERAL TERM, FOR THE STUDY OF COMIC ART IS TO STUDY THE WORLD OF COMICS AS WELL. THE LETTER COLUMN IS MEANT TO BE A SUPPLEMENT TO CC, NOT A PART OF IT. THE SIXTY-FIVE I PAID FOR AN HOUR OF JIM'S TIME WAS WELL WORTH IT. NOT JUST FOR THE ART, BUT RATHER FOR THE FRIEND I MADE. YOU CAN'T PUT A PRICE TAG ON A FRIENDSHIP.

THOMAS HEGEMAN- Congratulations on Comic Crusader #4. John Fantucchio's art was great. Tom Fagan's article on Air Boy is one of the best articles that I have seen in your magazine. Steve Ditko's Mr. A was a welcome sight, as was Jim Steranko's Nick Fury. I also enjoyed the article on his con speech, especially the part on the Comics Code.

Speaking of the Code, I was a little surprised when I saw the cover of Flash #185. One of the protesters in the crowd is holding a sign that says "Give A Damn". I don't know how National got this by the Code, but more power to them.

I was overjoyed to see a picture of you in the Comic Chatter column. Do you always dress up in your Defender costume? And who's your friend with the glasses? Re: The Defender: I don't like to complain, and I realize it is a continued strip, but it is going nowhere fast. Perhaps some of that extra offset material that w're paying 35 cents for will be deoted to his strip, hmm? I hope so. He's one of the best amaheroes I've seen.

OF ALL THE MATERIAL IN COMIC CRUSADER, THE DEFENDER TAKES ME THE MOST TIME TO PUT TOGETHER. MOST OF HIS EARLY STORIES WERE NMEANT TO ESTABLISH HIS CHARACTER AND AS YOU CAN SEE, BY THIS ISSUE'S STORY, A PLOT IS BEGINNING TO DEVELOPE. SORRY, BUT THE DEFENDER STAYS TWO PAGES.
(NOTE - BECAUSE OF THE LENGTH OF THE NEXT TWO LETTERS, I'VE HAD TO EDIT PORTIONS OF EACH.

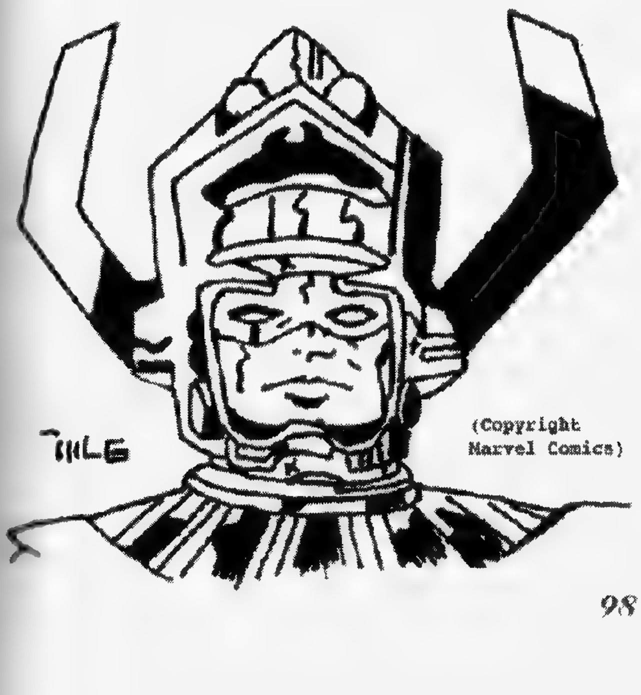
RON LIBERMAN- The cover of issue #4 I must honestly say bwas not one of John's better drawings. In fact it was vastly out-of-proportion. But since John is obviously capable of correct proportioning, let us assume he did it this way for effect...and failed. Still, the cover wasn't too bad.

Crusader comments was a good start. This issue was indeed "gratifying", as you put it. It was easily the best I've read. I don't want to make this letter sound like a stereotyped "Boy, that issue was your best yet!" type of thing, I must say that issue 4 was the best fanzine I've read in a long time. I liked The Vulture done by John Fantucchio, even though it was not, again, his best work. In case you want to know what I feel his best work is, a lot of it appeared in The Collector #13; the best being his Flash Gordon illo. I do not care for Golden Age articles, but Airboy was a little different. I liked the manner in which Fagan related the real World War II to the comic book, and that conversation with Charles Biro was good, too.

Steve Ditko's contribution was alright, but then again, I dislike his Mr. A. As I have told many others, I feel Steve's best strip was The Hulk. I believe he put more into this strip, or got more out of it than any other Ditko-dominated book.

Perhaps the highlight of the issue, Jim Staerako's con speech interested me greatly. The entire affair was well done, and I'm sorry I couldn't make it up there. "How I Draw Nick Fury" must have been a real treat to artists (count me out), for it fascinated me. Even more gratifying was that your Nick Fury was a masterpiece - and in the Steranko style all the way!

GALACTIC ILLUSTRATIONS



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You may think Steranko inks himself the best, I don't. Probably Frank Giacoia has that distinction, but then one must not forget Joe Sinnott, who has to be the best inker in comicdom. I'd love to see Joe pencil and ink his own strip.

The interview with Steve Fritz (who is another person unknown to me) was a successful contribution to this issue. If that pic of Dr. Midnite on the left-hand corner of the page was done by him, he certainly is a talented artist! Oh, and John's Spectre was the best job he did for you! I felt that The City In The Sky, Fandom's Finest, Captain Wonder, and the Silent Knight were articles that just wasted space. The latter two were especially guilty, because of their brevity. I didn't dig that Visit From Batman story, but then, I never liked Batman, unless he was drawn by Infantino. As in past issues, the script of the Defender was poor, in comparison with the art. To say the least, the latter was some of the best amateur art I've ever seen! Do you have any plans on turning pro later in your life? The Ghost Patrol was so-so. I liked Donna Astin's drawing and I'd like to see more of her in the future. That was a fine idea to have you, the editor, beside your creation, The Defender. Good show!

WELL, YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, RON THAT YOU'RE NO ARTIST, SO I DON'T GO ALONG WITH EVERYTING YOU SAID ABOUT ART. AS FOR THE DEFENDER'S STORYLINE, I THINK THE REASON YOU DON'T CARE FOR IT IS THAT BECAUSE I DON'T WRITE IT IN CLIFF-HANGER STYLE LIKE I DO SPACE GUARDIAN IN CHAMPION. I HAVE NO PLANS TO GO PRO.

FRED HEMBECK - When I sent for Comic Crusader, it was only out of mild curiosity, built by the review of C.C. in the DC comics. I never expected a zine of such high quality at such a low price. I won't go so far as to say it's the best I've ever read but suffice to say it is up there with the best fandom has to offer.

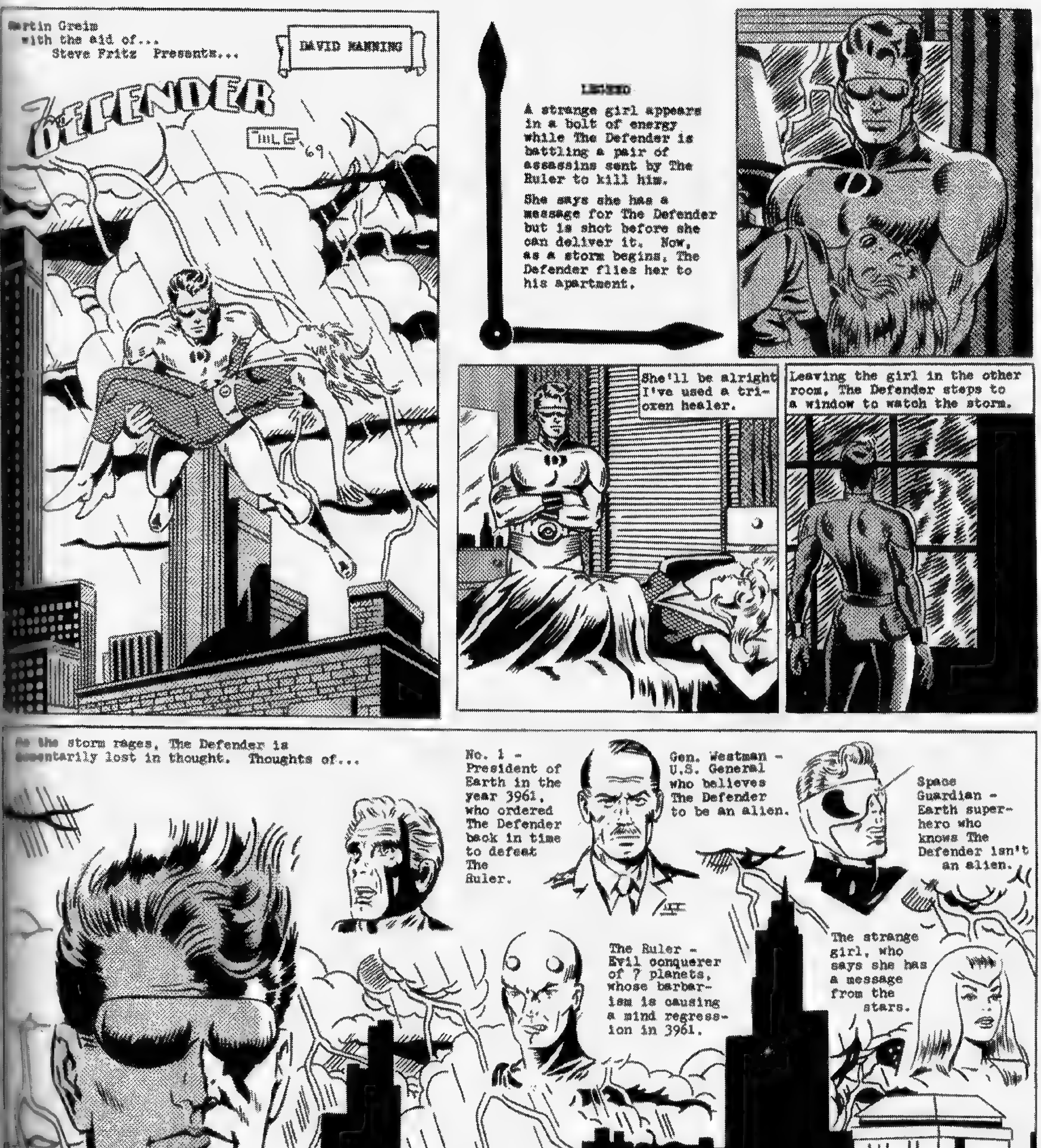
Steranko's con speech ranks first with me. The article gave an insight into the great talent of my favorite artist. The photos of Jim were good; very clear repro, and of course it was nice to see another piece of his art, in the form of Fury, by him. Equally interesting was Steve Ditko's Mr. A illo. I wonder, though, is this Ditko's own philosophy, that of either black or white but no gray? It's strange because most of those Spider-Mans he masterminded dealt mostly with "gray" characters. Why the coplete reversal? Ah well, if this is his philosophy, I must say I can't agree with him, but this is neither the time of place for a philosophical debate, so let's forget that.

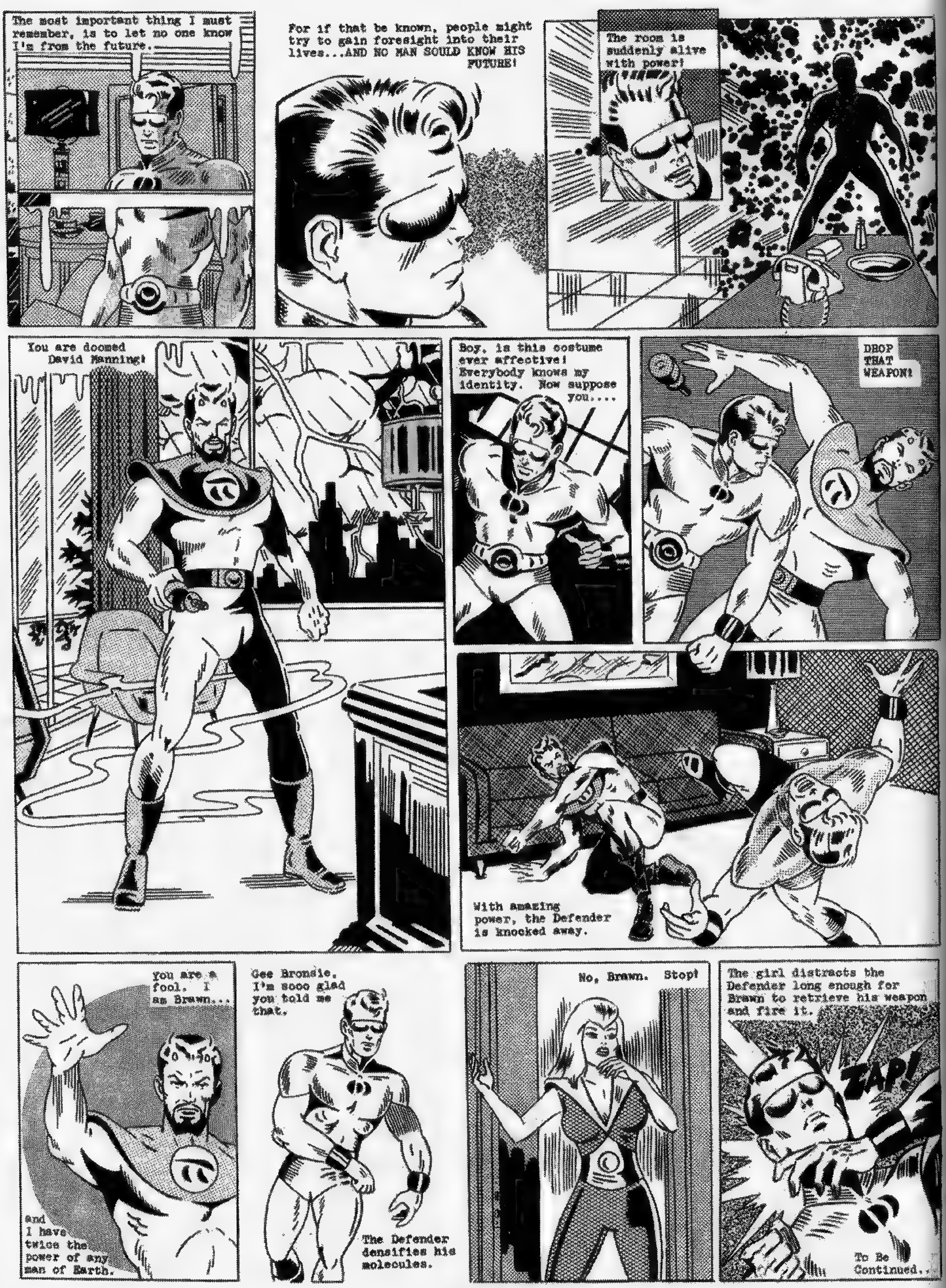
John Fantucchio's art brightens any fanzine, and his work in CC #4 was no exception. His Vulture was my favorite. Tom Fagan is a good writer and turned out a good article on Airboy. This character, great as he may have been, is of little interest to me. Tom's writing ability was good enough to hold my interest, though.

Comic Chatter, Mongo Mania, Fandom's Finest and your profile on Steve Fritz were all interesting fillers. I think you should expand Comic Chatter and put it into your Ditto section. Lastly, your ama-strip The Defender. As a rule I like ama-strips, and I don't really care for this one. Why use up two pages on an ama-strip when you can give us articles like those you've shown us? If you keep it, I won't be all that disturbed. The scripting was my biggest gripe.

I DON'T PLAN ON DROPPING THE DEFENDER. THIS AMA-STRIP OFFERS A RELIEF FROM THE REST OF THE ARTICLE FILLED ZINE.

ABOUT ADS: This zine is not an adzine and any any ad seen here has my personal recommendation. Before I accept an ad for C.C. I must see the zine first, then I'll send out ad rates. This system may seem a little strange, but since I'm not dependant on ads, I prefer to do it this way. humor me, allright?

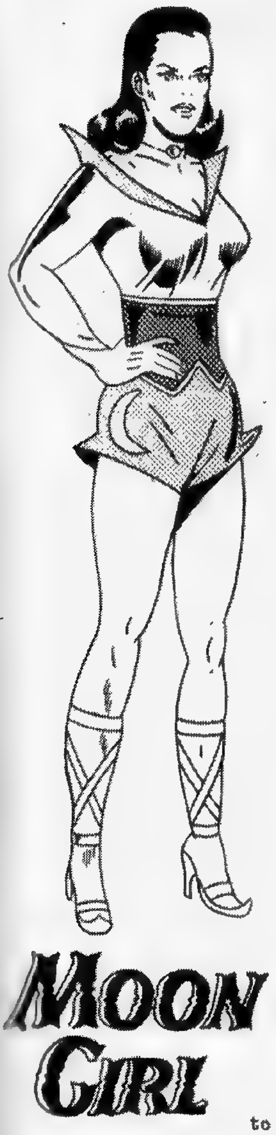

Martin Greim
with the aid of...
Steve Fritz Presents...
DAVID MANNING
The DEFENDER
MLG '69
LEGEND
A strange girl appears in a bolt of energy while The Defender is battling a pair of assassins sent by The Ruler to kill him.
She says she has a message for The Defender but is shot before she can deliver it. Now, as a storm begins, The Defender flies her to his apartment.
She'll be alright I've used a tri-oxen healer.
Leaving the girl in the other room, The Defender steps to a window to watch the storm.
As the storm rages, The Defender is momentarily lost in thought. Thoughts of...
No. 1 - President of Earth in the year 3961, who ordered The Defender back in time to defeat The Ruler.
Gen. Westman - U.S. General who believes The Defender to be an alien.
Space Guardian - Earth super-hero who knows The Defender isn't an alien.
The Ruler - Evil conquerer of 7 planets, whose barbarism is causing a mind regression in 3961.
The strange girl, who says she has a message from the stars.

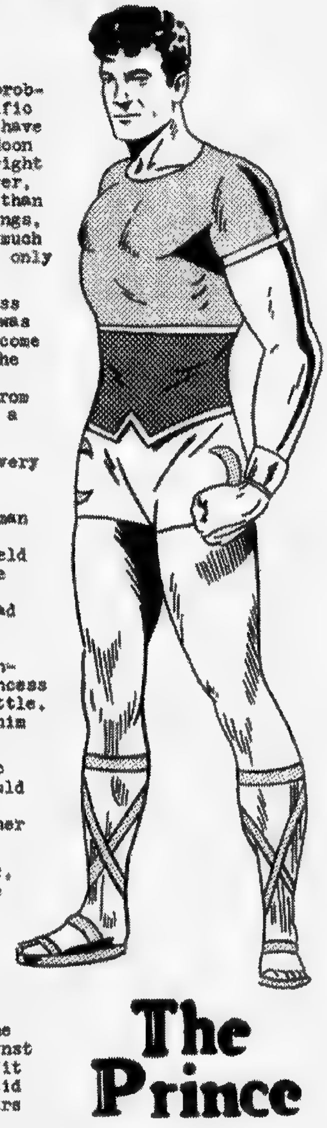

The most important thing I must remember, is to let no one know I'm from the future.
For if that be known, people might try to gain foresight into their lives...AND NO MAN SOULD KNOW HIS FUTURE!
The room is suddenly alive with power!
You are doomed David Manning!
Boy, is this costume ever affective! Everybody knows my identity. Now suppose you....
DROP THAT WEAPON!
With amazing power, the Defender is knocked away.
You are a fool. I am Brawn...
and I have twice the power of any man of Earth.
Gee Bronsie, I'm sooo glad you told me that.
The Defender densifies his molecules.
No, Brawn. Stop!
The girl distracts the Defender long enough for Brawn to retrieve his weapon and fire it.
ZAP!
To Be Continued..

history's Heroes #5.

EC's WONDER WOMAN

Art and Article
by
Martin L. Greim





If you are familiar with the world of comics at all, you are probably aware that EC was a comic line noted for its realism and terrific art. What you may not be aware of, however, is that this line did have one costumed hero book. Moon Girl and The Prince. That's right, Moon Girl was an EC character. Moon Girl, it has been said, was an outright copy of D.C.'s Wonder Woman and to a certain extent she was. However, I believe she was a better written and a more believable character than D.C.'s amazon ever was. Moon Girl's origin appeared in, of all things, a funny animal book. Animal Fables #7. The story was laid out in much the same way Wonder Woman's was. (A story Around spot illos.) The only differance being, her source of power and a slightly altered plot.

The story opened in the mountains of Samarkand. There, Princess Moon Girl, known for her superhuman strength, speed and endurance, was confronted by a suitor. Prince Mengu, a true son of Hercules, had come to ask for her hand in marriage. Moon Girl beseeched her mother, the Queen of Samarkand, not to let the marriage take place. The Queen Mother then told her daughter of an ancient contest, carried down from the days of Marco Polo. A tradition that must be satisfied, before a marriage cermony could take place.

She told of how, during the 13th century, the daughter of the very first Princess of the Moon, not wishing to marry a man weaker than herself, arranged a contest of strength with her suitors. However, the Princess of the Moon was as strong as she was beautiful and no man was her equal. One day, though, a man of princely bearing came and she feel in love with him, but her pride would not permit her to yield to a man less strong than herself. He was stronger than any man she ever met, yet, after a desperate struggle, she defeated him and the young man rode away - bitter with despair. The princess was left sad and lonely. Soon afterward her country was involved in a series of battles. Durring one of these battles, the princess slew an evil wizard and took from him a magic moonstone talisman that made her invincible to harm and multiplied her strength tremendously. The princess was still sad, 'till one day she spied her love, in the midst of battle. Dashing forward, she snatched him from his horse and returned with him to her people. The Princess of the Moon had found her true love.

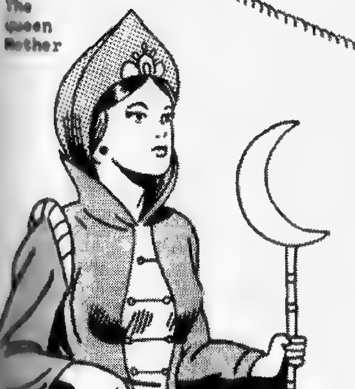
After telling Moon Girl this tale, The Queen gave her the magic moonstone. All she had to do was touch it and tremendous powers would be hers. (It was later told, the stone glowed red when danger was nearby.) From that day on, Moon Girl always wore the moonstone at her throat.

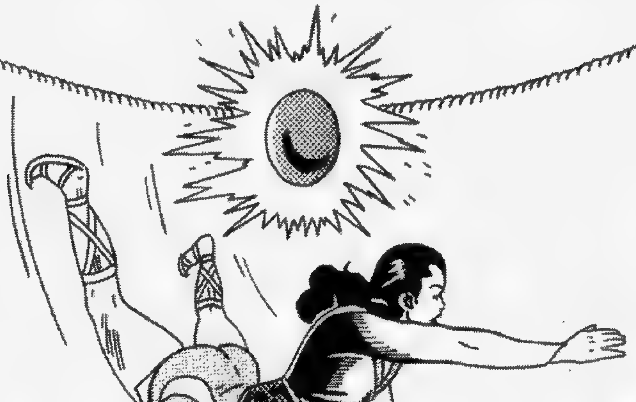
The contest between Moon Girl and Prince Mengu was a mighty one, but in the end Moon Girl was the victor. And like her ancestor, she was saddened when the Prince rode away. Realizing she had made a mistake, Moon Girl decided to find him and win him back. She finally discovered him in America, where under the name of Lionel Manning, he was an athletic coach in a college. They were united at last; but both loving their adopted country, they decided to stay and dedicate themselves to fighting evil.

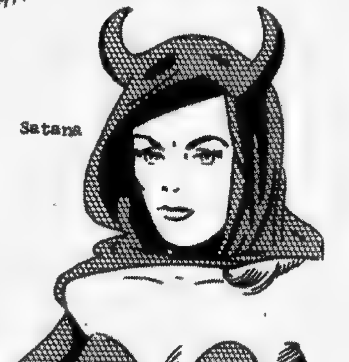
Moon Girl took the name Clare Lune and became a teacher at the same college as The Prince. Soon after, she locked in battle against Satana, one of her most evil foes. Satana dressed in a green outfit and a hooded cape with horns on it. She was an apt foe for the maid of the moon. With each encounter, it took all of Moon Girl's powers to defeat her.

Moon Girl, as a character, was better done than Wonder Woman. Though simmilar, she used the magic of her moonstone for powers; and rather than a Steve Trevor, always chasing after her, she had The Prince as an ally. It is too bad today, when even Wonder Woman is no longer super, that Moon Girl couldn't be revived. Comic magazines are sorely in need of a good super heroine, in its second heroic age.

The Queen Mother





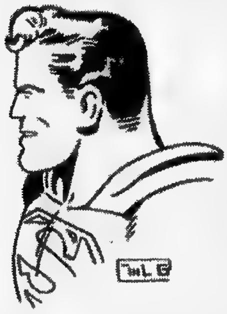


COMIC CHATTER

Well, here we are at the close of another issue. And, once again, it's time to relate any comic news I've come across.

Item

Recently, while in a magazine store, I came upon a coloring book. Now hang in there, I haven't gone bye-bye. This book has work by Neal Adams, Milton Caniff, Leonard Starr, and Al Capp, just to name a few. The book is called "Parade of the Comics" and features a parade of America's favorite newspaper cartoon characters. The art was especially drawn for the book. It's put out by The Saalfield Pub. Co. of New York (address unknown). Keep an eye out for this coloring book. It's a real buy for 29¢.

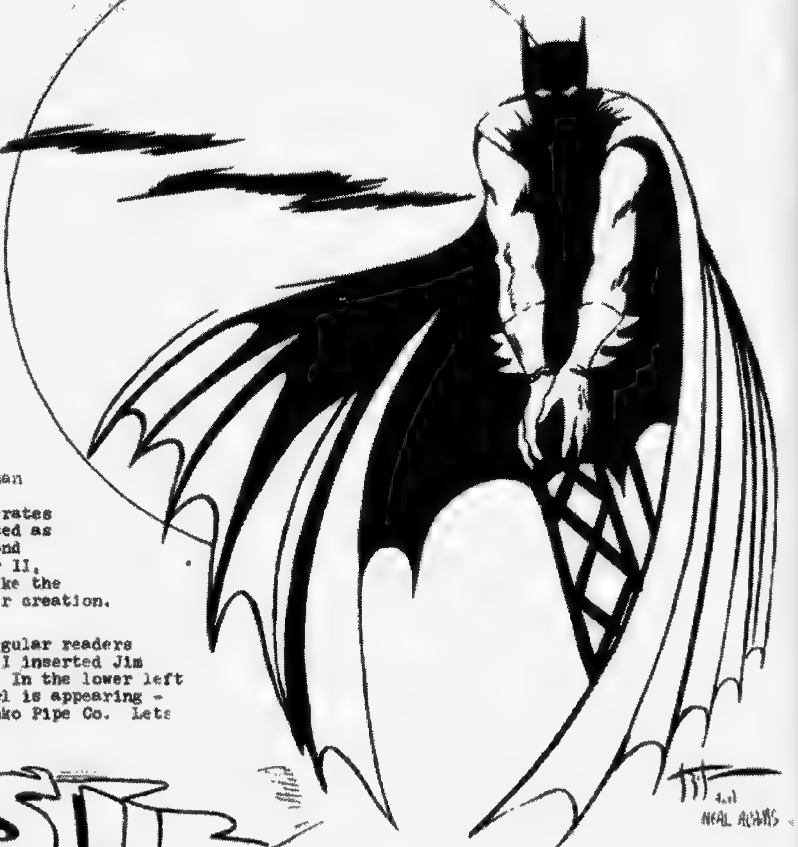


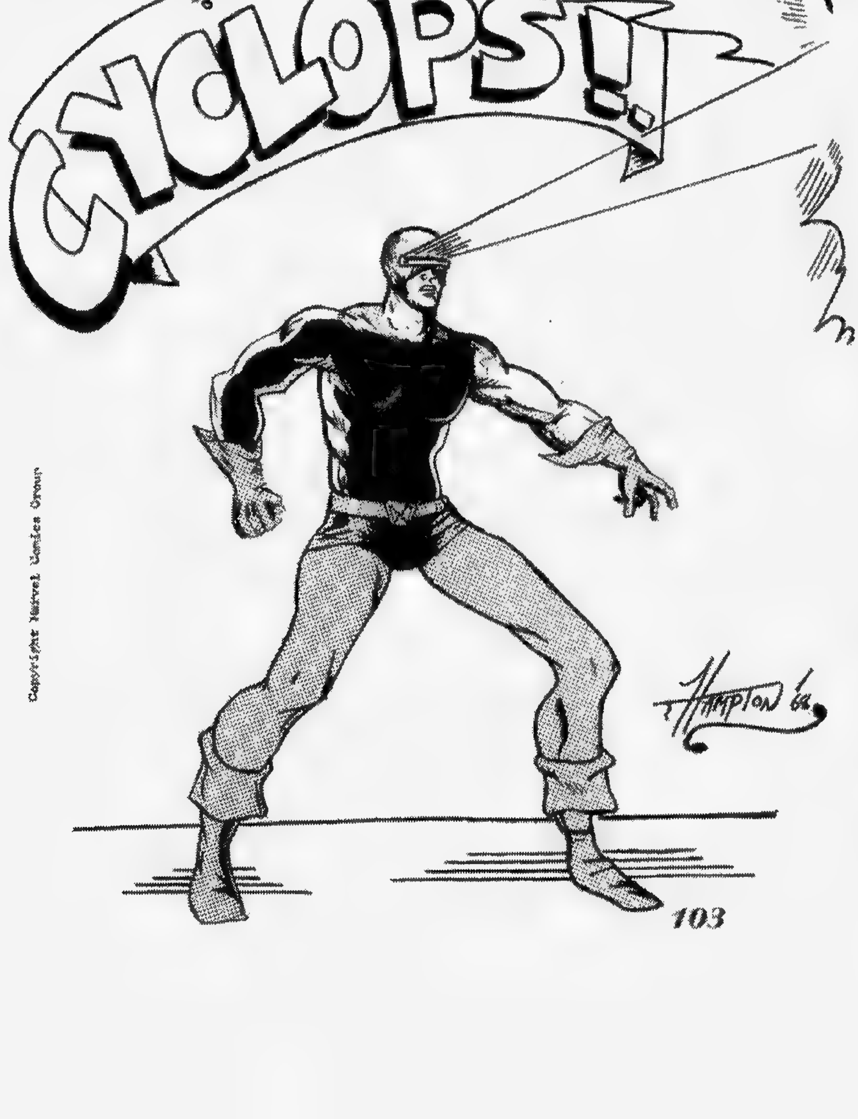
Item

Did you know, that in the town of Winthrop, Mass., the man who was the model for the face and physique of Jerry Siegel's work on Superman resides. His name is Kayo J. Koan and he operates a health spa. Koan posed as Superman for Savings Bond drives during World War II, and looked amazingly like the early Siegel and Shuster creation.

Item

How many of you regular readers noticed the sneaky way I inserted Jim Steranko's name in last issues Defender strip? In the lower left panel of the second page, the one where the girl is appearing - check the name on the pipe railing. The Steranko Pipe Co. Lets stay awake out there fans.




IT'S...
CYCLOPS!!
HAMPTON '68

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Speaking of Jim Steranko - Did you know there is a Dell paperback out called "Bullet Proof" by Frank Kane and that it has for a cover a Jim Steranko swipe by Tony Destefano. The swipe is taken from S.H.I.E.L.D. #2 and is the panel where the actress is saying to the male lead, "White God...Monster loose...save village...come quick", and he replies that if her delivery gets any worse, he's going to let the village get stomped. The swipe is an exact one, except the figure positions are reversed and the coloring is different.

Jim is also working on the cover design for two new Marvel books. These books are called "Tower of Fear" and "The Castle of Fear". These books will be like DC's Witching Hour and will feature 3, seven page stories, with shock endings, per issue.

For the many, many fans who have asked me about Jim Steranko's "Talon"...Jim tells me that it has been set aside for the moment. It's Jim's property and he will have it published at some future date.

I'm told that Sal Buscema may be doing The Avengers.

S.H.I.E.L.D. may be brought back as a bi-monthly, with Herb Trimpe as the artist.

By this time most of you know that Jack Kirby has moved to California. I include this fact, just in case you didn't.

The Heap is coming to Comic Crusader!

The John McGeehan contest, that was presented in issue #3 of this publication, has as yet gone unsolved. I hereby declare the contest void. Perhaps I'll run another one, a little easier, in a future issue.

In closing, if any of you fans come across anything you think might be of interest to other fans, write and let me know. I'll print it here. After all, this is the Fanzine With The Fan In Mind. See you next ish.....MLG.

ON SALE LATE IN JUNE.....

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NO. 6

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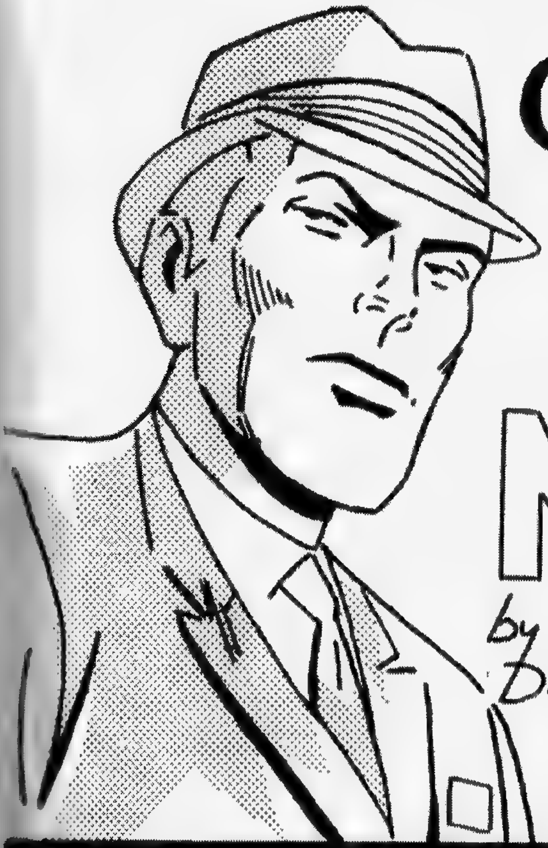

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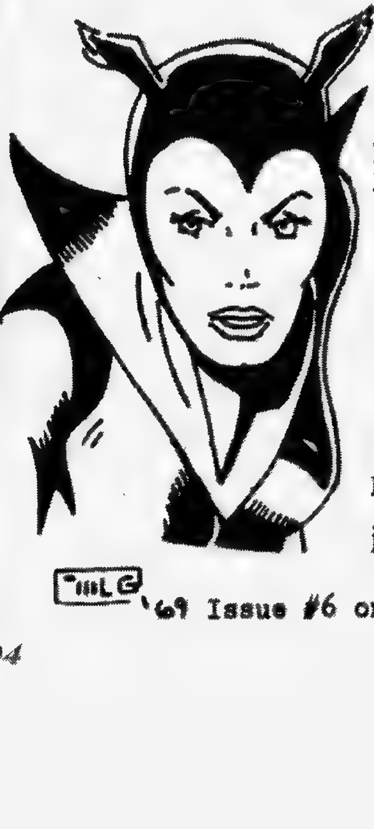

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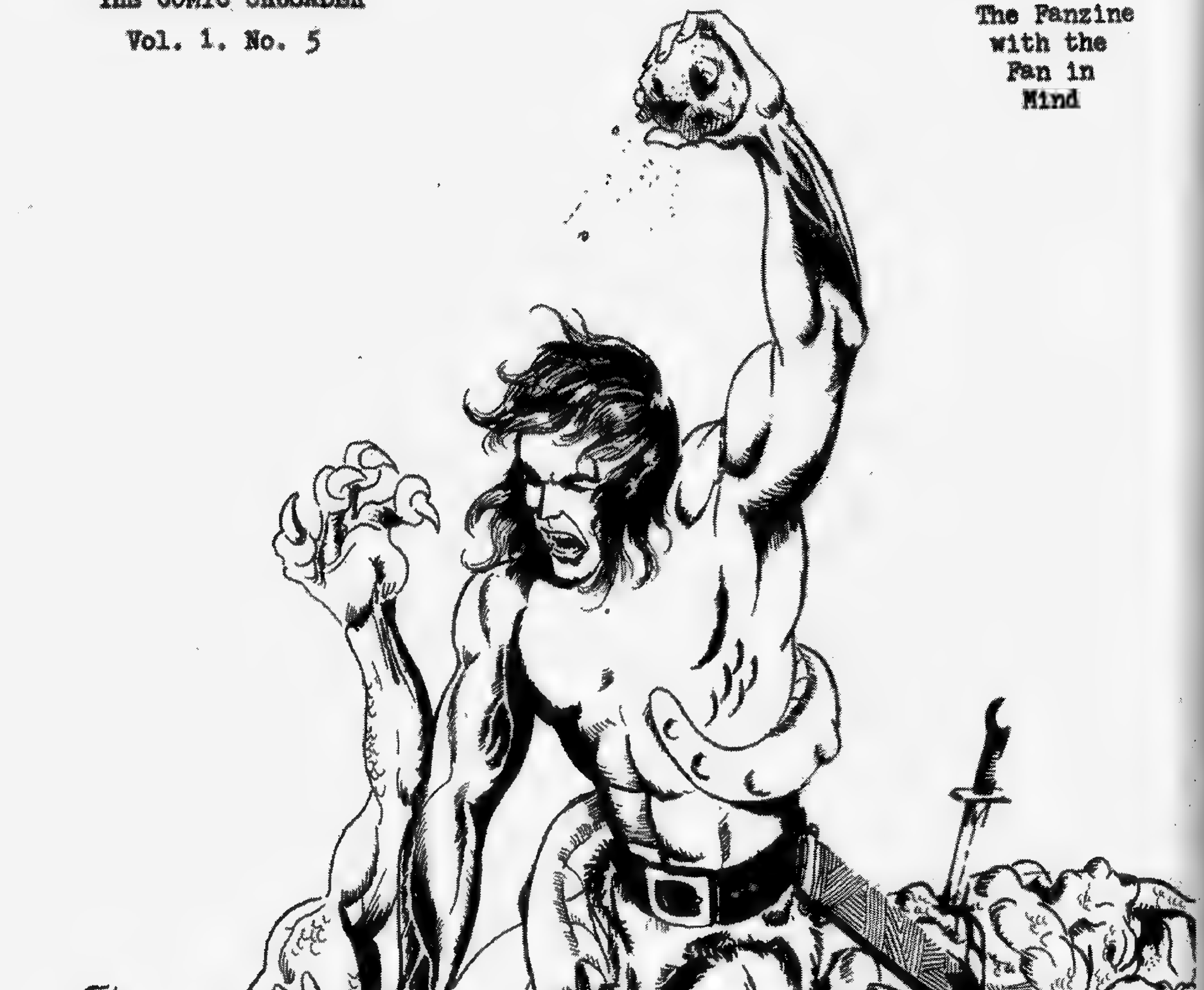
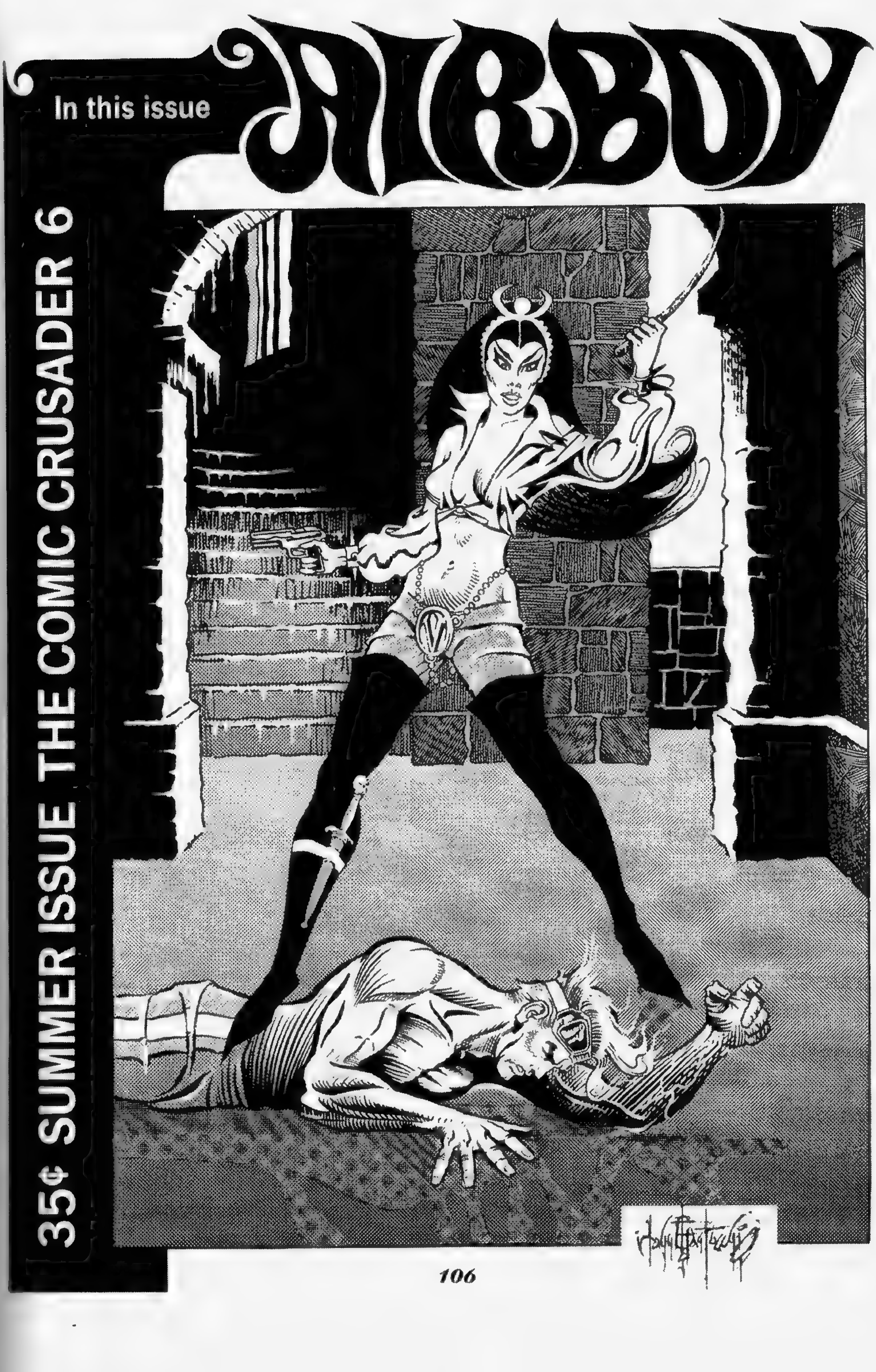
THE COMIC CRUSADER
Vol. 1. No. 5

The Fanzine
with the
Fan in
Mind




In this issue
AIRBOY
35¢ SUMMER ISSUE THE COMIC CRUSADER 6

CRUSADER COMMENTS

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Donna Astin - Bob Cosgrove - STEVE DITKO
Tom Fagan - John Fantucchio - Steve Fritz
Ronn Foss - Dennis Fujitake - Keith Fujumitsu
Martin L. Greim - Gary Kato - JIM STERANKO

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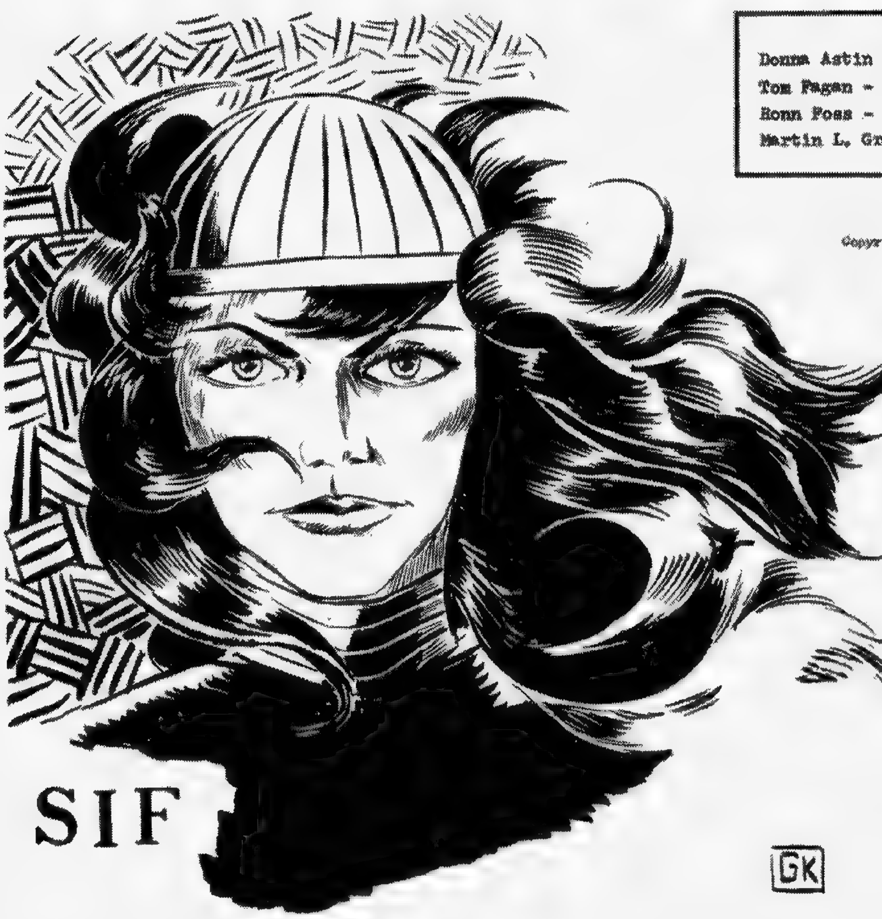
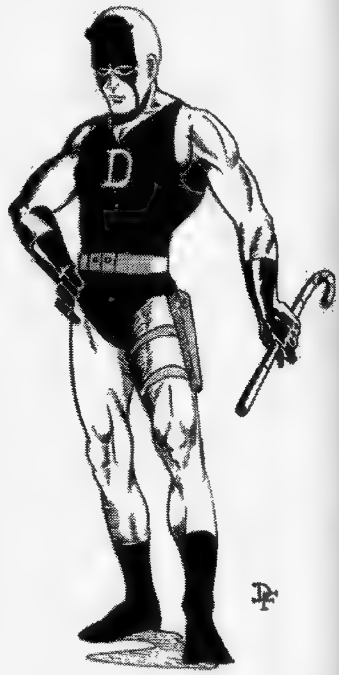




I would like to start this editorial by thanking the many artists, Pro and Amateur alike, who have made this issue what it is.

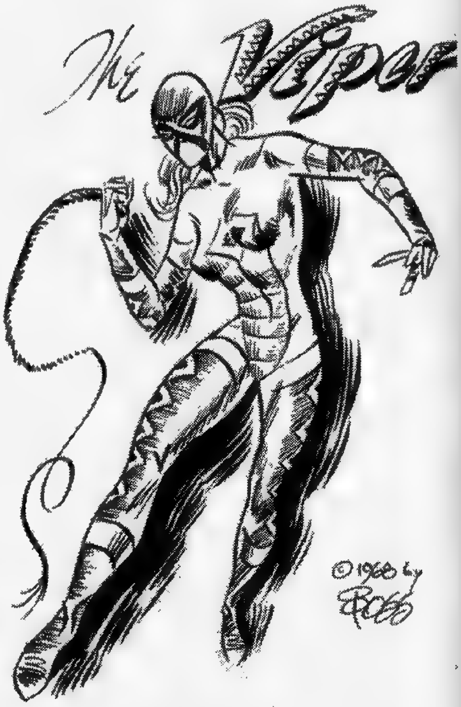
A special thanks goes to **STEVE DITKO**, who is presenting, in these pages, a 2-part Mr. A strip. This strip is taking the place of The Defender strip, for two issues.

About Mr. A. This strip is not the usual fast action kind, but rather - **ONE TO MAKE YOU THINK!** Whether or not you agree with the qhilosophy in the Mr. A strip is immaterial, what does matter is that you think about it. Mr. A is perhaps one of the most controversial strips today. It is something new in the idea of storytelling and above all else - It Does Have A Message!

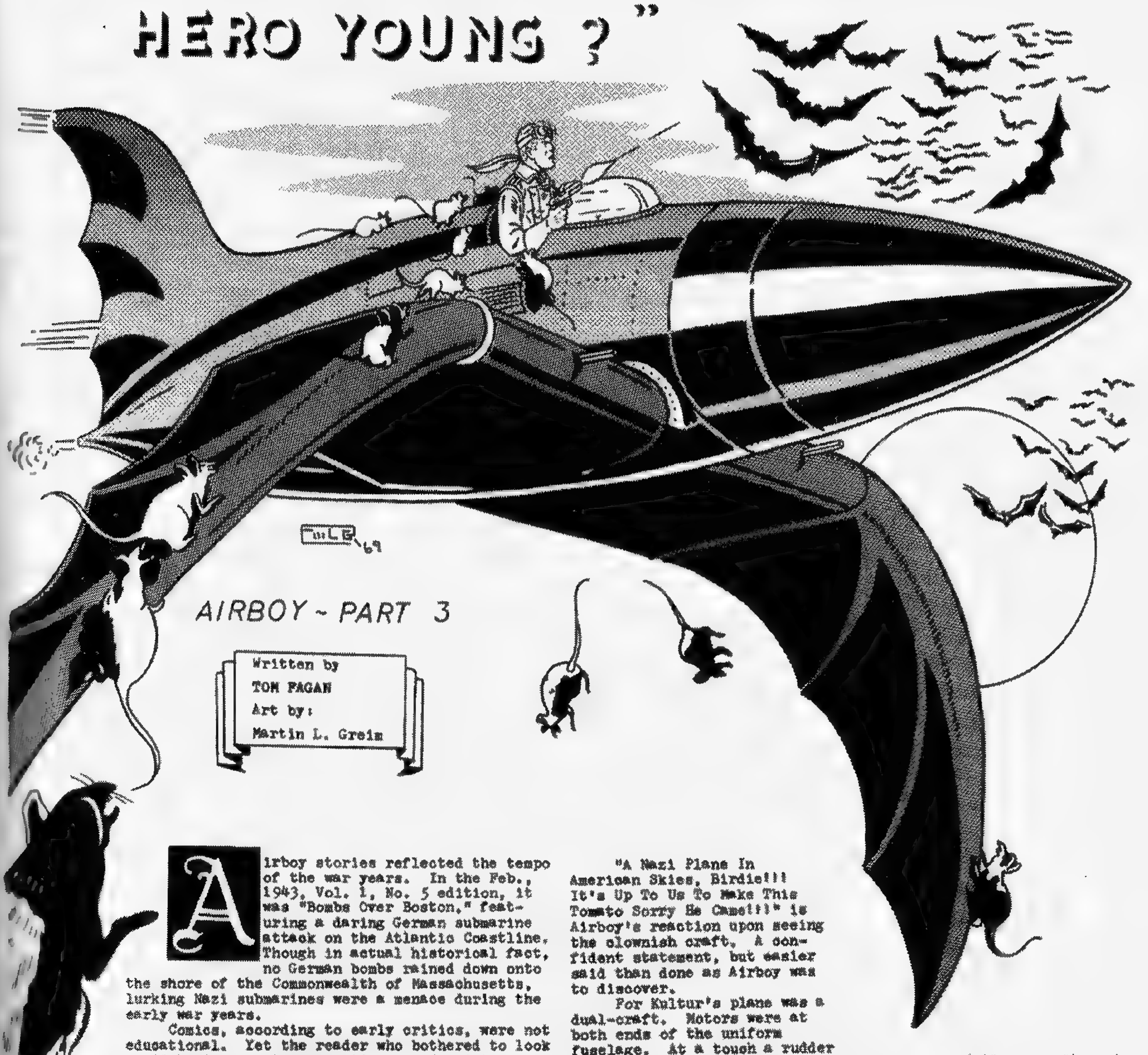
Many talented fans have sent me contributions and I will be using them in the near future. Please keep in mind, when contributing to "The Comic Crusader", to look at your work objectively. Take the position of you being the editor. Would you ask someone to pay 35¢ to look at, or read your material. Sure Contribute! But remember what this fanzine stands for - To Present The Best Material Obtainable, Relating To The Comic Media! Hence this fanzine's motto - "The Fanzine With The Fan In Mind!"

I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE ISSUE.

Yours truly,
Martin L. Greim



"AND DID YOU NOT HEAR OF A HERO YOUNG ?"



AIRBOY - PART 3

Written by
TOM FAGAN
Art by:
Martin L. Greim

Airboy stories reflected the tempo of the war years. In the Feb., 1943, Vol. 1, No. 5 edition, it was "Bombs Over Boston," featuring a daring German submarine attack on the Atlantic Coastline. Though in actual historical fact, no German bombs rained down onto the shore of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, lurking Nazi submarines were a menace during the early war years.

Comics, according to early critics, were not educational. Yet the reader who bothered to look up Airboy's newest opponent's name found "Kultur" to mean three things:

(1) "Civilization, culture, and social organization.
(2) "The undemocratic and pompous aspects of the German Nazi regimes: an ironical usage.
(3) "In Nazi jargon, the racial and historic superiorities of Germany and the Germans."

This latter definition was soon to be disproved by Airboy and Birdie. Even as the story opened Youth Kultur had proven his aerial skill by shooting down and killing a fellow airman in a contest staged by the Germans.

"Am I Not The Greatest Air Fighter In All of Germany??" says the victor. "To Be Sure," answers Herr Goerink, (a high Nazi air official) "You Are The Nazi Super Boy! YOUTH KULTURE--You Are Der Greatest Ace In The World Today!!"

Kultur is to go to America on a sabotage mission for the [illegible] but his real reason in wanting the assignment is, "There Iss One In America Who Must Be Beaten By Me--My Guns Vill End AIRBOY'S Mastery!"

An arrogant youth, Kulture wears a flamboyant costume of [illegible] and emerald, complete with cape and an encircled swastica chest emblem. To be sure the reader will not possibly mistake Kultur for anything by a German, the stereotyped monocle is part of the wearing apparell.

Kultur's plane is a laughable-looking but deadly craft. At first glance it resembles nothing more than a knockwurst sausage with short, stubby wings. Mainly it is green in color except for two painted bands of red, setting off the swastica insignia on each wing.

"A Nazi Plane In American Skies, Birdie!!! It's Up To Us To Make This Tomato Sorry He Came!!!" is Airboy's reaction upon seeing the clownish craft. A confident statement, but easier said than done as Airboy was to discover.

For Kultur's plane was a dual-craft. Motors were at both ends of the uniform fuselage. At a touch a rudder could fan out and become a propeller, while at the opposite end the propeller stopped and became a rudder. Coupled with this, guns and pilot's seat pivoted to all positions, as the plane went backward or forward according to Kultur's whim.

Vowed Airboy, "We'll Lick Him Even If He Flies Ninety Ways!" And when Kultur attempted "Der Nazi Suicide Crash" by flying head on at his opponent, Airboy pulled Birdie sharply up and the bird plane captured the Nazi craft in mid-flight, holding it in a vice-like grip.

Out to sea flies Birdie still holding onto the other plane "like a vulture." Over dark waters the craft is released to fall into the sea, which is to become a watery grave for Kultur. "Boy! I Wish Hitler Could See You Now!" is Airboy's rather un-Christian remark as the enemy plane sinks beneath the waters. Reaction in Berlin as Nazi officials hear of Youth Kultur's defeat?

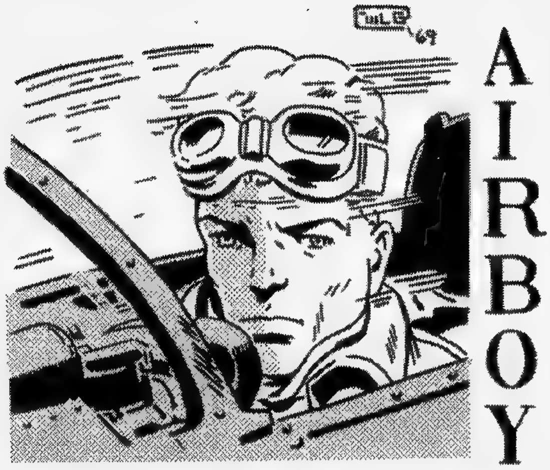
"Dot AIRBOY Again!! Und He Iss Only ONE Of Dem Americans!! Imagine If Dere Are Odders As Daring!"

Where upons follows the story's conclusion as Air Fighters Comics in an editorial and proclaimed patriotically:

"YES!! THERE ARE OTHER AMERICANS LIKE AIRBOY!!--YOU NAZIS WILL SEE THEM--AND HOW!!"

Vol. 1, No. 8, May 1943, Airboy was again pitted against Japanese foes. The story proved:

"Nothing From Tokio Can Fool Airboy!!! And the skies of the World Won't Protect A Jap Spider Who Kills Airboy's Friend!!!...but Yankee Blood Runs Red In The Pacific Before Airboy Accepts Hara-Kiri As A Coward's Farewell." (Tony DiPreta was the artist on this story.)



AIRBOY

DiPreta's artwork was again evident in the tale unfolded in Vol. 1, No. 9, June-1943 saga, which let all of America know, "The Odds Are Against Hitler's Gang!! And AIRBOY is one of the reasons why!!!"

"...It's No Wonder That Axis Robots Become Clay Pigeons Before AIRBOY'S Guns...And By His Air Supremacy He Is Only One Hero Who Is Clutching Back To America What Is Rightfully Ours!!! AND NOW!"

The story modestly admitted Airboy was a "Typical American Lad." Even England breathed easier because of the "typical" boy from across the pond. Relief for the "mother country" came in the July, 1943, issue of Vol. 1, No. 10, with artwork by Barry Kida.

Victory or defeat for England hung in the balance as "High Over London, Bathed by Blinding, Sweeping Pencils of Light, A Dogfight of Desperate Importance Takes Place!"

Out of Italy, Hitler had picked NINO TRANTI, The 'Whistling Killer,' who rides the wild winds in his silent "stinger." It was a memorable battle of two aerial aces that ended with Birdie and the "Silent Nazi Plane" racing toward one another each in the other's direct line of fire.

Neither expected to survive. Yet as the Italian flyer's plane flamed earthward, Birdie managed with a mangled wing to flutter to safety. "He Was The Toughest Yet," Airboy later told a British lass, Pat Royce.

But in the very next issue (AIR FIGHTERS COMICS, Vol. 1, No. 11, August 1943) the assignment was even tougher. Airboy's task--go to Bilgalden, Norway, to rescue the French General Ferrand, held prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. Airboy brought the French high command officer back to England and freedom literally on a "wing and a prayer," with the general clutching onto the outside of Birdie's wing, as the bird-plane crashed-dived to safety onto the deck of a waiting British carrier.

Four super German aircraft with four super German pilots were Airboy's foes in mad sky action featured in Vol. 2, No. 1, AIR FIGHTERS of October, 1943. Goebbels, himself, had challenged the Allies to down these pilots, who flew planes named respectively "Pestilence," "Famine," "Death" and "War." Airboy accepted the challenge, almost loosing his life and Birdie in the process.

The Nazi snake even wended its way into the wilds of Central America and the ruins of an ancient Indian civilization in AIR FIGHTERS Vol. 2, No. 5, February, 1944. A legend foretold of a golden-haired youth who would come in a metal bird to free an enslaved people. The phrophecy was fullfilled as Airboy swept out of the skies to blast the hold acquired by the Germans over the remnant of the once mighty Mayans and washout the sign of the hated Nazi Swastika over Central America.

Advertisements carried in these early issues of Air Fighters Comics deserve some mention for they showed the thinking of an America at war.

"Boys! Be Ready For Enemy Attacks," forewarned one ad. How to do it? Send away for a JUNIOR AIR RAID WARDEN KIT. By clipping a coupon and sending $1.69 (postage to be paid on arrival) one would receive a carrying case holding a helmet, badge, a junior air warden arm band, a first aid kit, whistle, ID card, note book, report sheet, splints and a "gas mask."

As the ad said it was "an amazing opportunity for every full-blooded American boy to prepare himself and his buddies against enemy air attacks. Lots of fun! Exciting! Thrilling!

And patriotic too, for as the ad pointed out, "You owe it to your Uncle Sam to know just what to do in the event of an air attack." Not only that but a kit would help you make friends...

"Everyone of your friends will want to play with you...you will become the most popular boy in the block. All of your boy friends will want a kit. Be the first to proudly wear and use the many articles included in your Junior Air Raid Warden kit..."

After that "sell," there were few who even dreamt of buying the "AMAZING FORECASTER," a weather house advertised in the next issue, though perhaps they might consider sending a three-cent stamp to have their favorite snapshot ENLARGED as promised two issues later.

There were ads to learn cartooning and build muscles but the one that lives in the memory of boys of 1943 was the one for the "New COMMANDO Krak-A-Jap Machine Gun." One ignored the "Safe, Harmless!" tiny slogan; though the $1.98 asking price was a factor to be heavily considered. Even so and by sending right away, a lucky purchaser would soon be the proud possessor of a FREE 5-Power Telescope.

There was magic in the words..."How would you like to play "WAR" with your very own KRAK-A-JAP Machine Gun? So completely does it resemble the real machine gun used by our COMMANDOS, that you will get a thrill when you hold it in your hands...The gang will be green with envy if you are the first in your neighborhood to get a KRAK-A-JAP Commando Machine Gun...If the KRAK-A-JAP isn't more fun than a 'barrel of Monkeys," just return it within 10 days and we will refund your money in full."

Airboy had first encountered MISERY in the September, 1943, edition of Air Fighters Comics, Vol. 1, No. 12. When destiny brought the two together again, it was fortunate for Airboy that Valkyrie was on the scene and that she was in a tender, loving mood.

The meeting referred to took place in the January, 1946 issue of the Hillman magazine, now known as AIRBOY COMICS. Vol. 2, No. 12, is somewhat of an Airboy classic.

To tell of Misery is to speak of one of the strangest villains in comic book lore. Clad in a green shroud, Misery's face was often hidden in shadow. When the hood fell away, the head was nothing more than a grinning skull.

Misery was known as "the host of all evil." He was a thing, an inhuman being subservient to a master, whose identity was only hinted at but never told. And Misery's perpetual mission was to be the keeper of "The Airtomb", a ghostly plane piloted from "the Black Hole of Calcutta," taking the bravest and most heroic airmen of them all for its own.

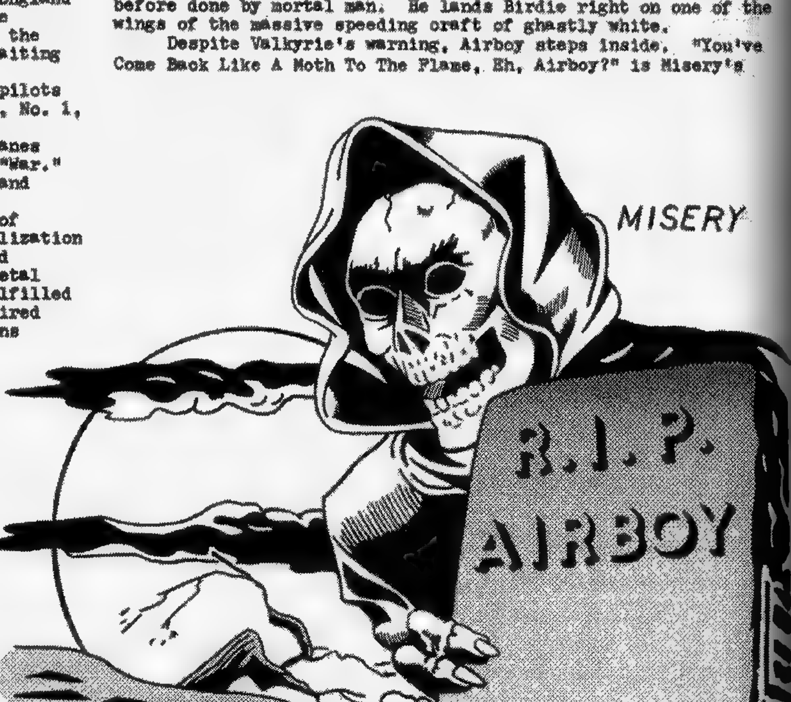
As Misery told Airboy, "You Should Know That Evil Can Not Die," and thus he returned to claim Airboy for The Airtomb, three years from the time Airboy had first defeated him. But first Misery put Valkyrie under his strange spell.

In order that the former Nazi Airmaiden could go free, Airboy gave himself up willingly to Misery, gazing full at him and dropping unconscious from the sight. Lifting Airboy bodily, Misery prepared to cast him to his death onto sharpened stones far below.

"Oh, Watcher Over The Fearless And Courageous, Who Have Taken Wings Against The Sky--I Bring To You The GREATEST Of All Airmen!!!" Misery howled triumphantly. But Valkyrie, released from her spell, instead pushed Misery, himself, into the yawning abyss at the same time rescuing Airboy.

Yet Airboy and Valkyrie were far from safety. Fleeing in Birdie, they in turn are followed by the Airtomb. Misery is not dead after all and Airboy decides to attempt a feat never before done by mortal man. He lands Birdie right on one of the wings of the massive speeding craft of ghastly white.

Despite Valkyrie's warning, Airboy steps inside. "You've Come Back Like A Moth To The Flame, Eh, Airboy?" is Misery's



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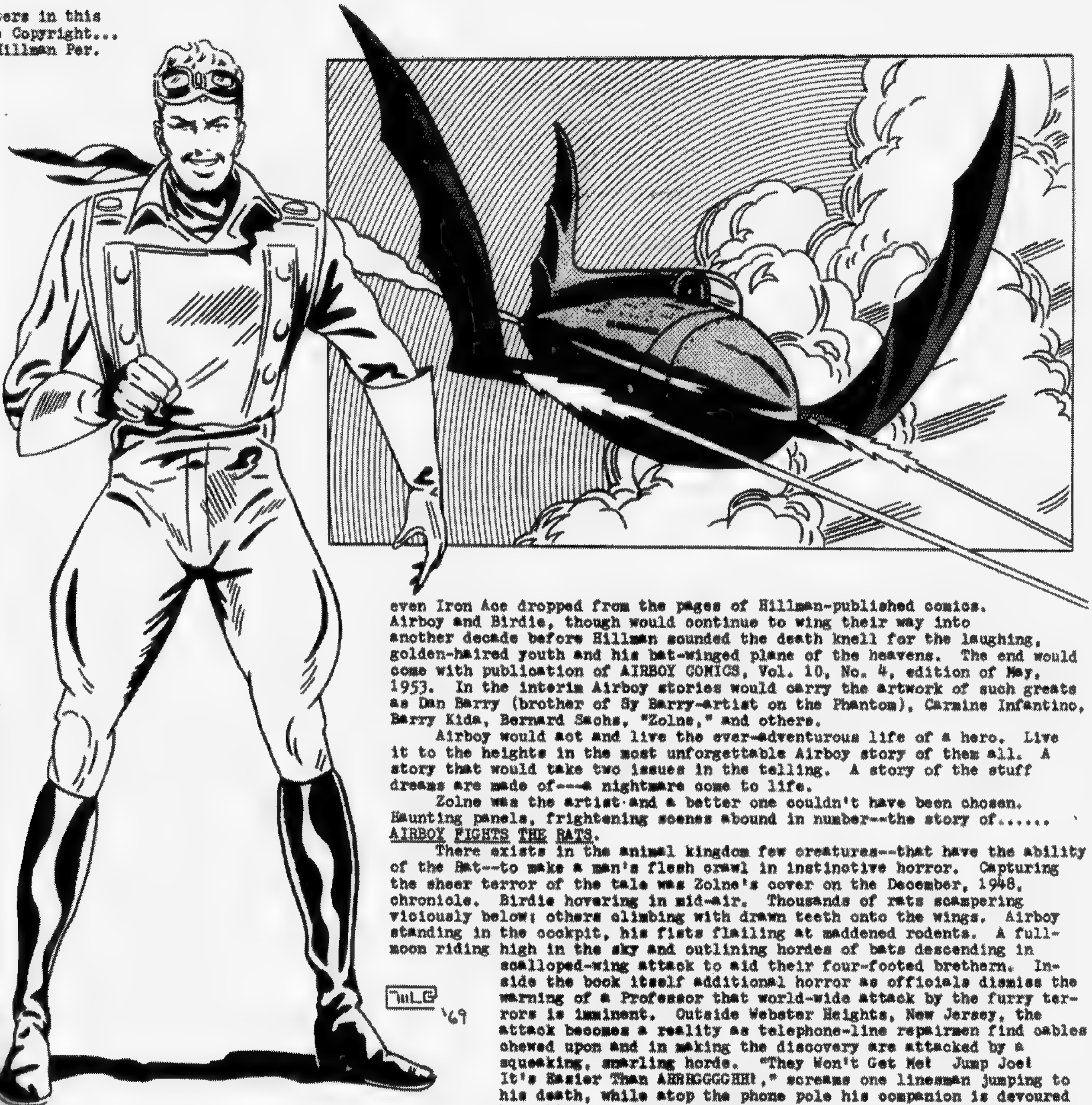


[illegible] challenge. In hand-to-hand combat with the grinning [illegible], Airboy wins only to be overcome by sickening, suf[illegible] vapors.

"Well, You Forced Me To Do It, Airboy! I've flooded [illegible] With Helium! --And We Shall Float Off Into Space--[illegible] Eternity--Never to Land Again--Once And For All, The [illegible] Has Claimed You!!!"

[illegible] in his boasting, Misery has forgotten Valkyrie. [illegible] by the heavy vapor, who enters the Airtomb and [illegible] Airboy to the safety of Birdie. Misery, beside him-[illegible] with fury, angrily mutters:

"The Young Devil Has Escaped From His Very Grave!!--But [illegible] Of A Thousand Dead Fliers Is Upon Him! I'll Get [illegible] Airboy--I Vow That I Will!!"

[illegible] then was Misery. A villain so hideous and evil, he [illegible] takes his place alongside such comic book evil [illegible] as the early Joker, Iron Jaw, Red Skull, The Hun and [illegible].

[illegible] as anxious as Valkyrie was to save Airboy's life in [illegible] recounted story, she was equally anxious to bring [illegible] end in Airboy Comics, Vol. 4, No. 10, November, 1947. [illegible] nature again has the upper hand and Valkyrie is [illegible] girl pilots to smuggle a dangerous drug into the [illegible] States for "a South American Syndicate."

[illegible] close friend of Airboy's does not realize Valkyrie is [illegible] him while pretending affection for him. In a [illegible] belief that Airboy is deliberately trying to break [illegible] Valkyrie up, the friend turns bitter. It takes a plane [illegible] the near death of Airboy before understanding is [illegible] and Valkyrie is turned over to the law.

[illegible] FIGHTERS COMICS with whole number 23 became AIRBOY [illegible]. Black Angel, Sky Wolf, Flying Dutchman and finally even Iron Ace dropped from the pages of Hillman-published comics. Airboy and Birdie, though would continue to wing their way into another decade before Hillman sounded the death knell for the laughing, golden-haired youth and his bat-winged plane of the heavens. The end would come with publication of AIRBOY COMICS, Vol. 10, No. 4, edition of May, 1953. In the interim Airboy stories would carry the artwork of such greats as Dan Barry (brother of Sy Barry--artist on the Phantom), Carmine Infantino, Barry Kida, Bernard Sachs, "Zolne," and others.

Airboy would act and live the ever-adventurous life of a hero. Live it to the heights in the most unforgettable Airboy story of them all. A story that would take two issues in the telling. A story of the stuff dreams are made of---a nightmare come to life.

Zolne was the artist and a better one couldn't have been chosen. Haunting panels, frightening scenes abound in number--the story of...... AIRBOY FIGHTS THE RATS.

There exists in the animal kingdom few creatures--that have the ability of the Rat--to make a man's flesh crawl in instinctive horror. Capturing the sheer terror of the tale was Zolne's cover on the December, 1948, chronicle. Birdie hovering in mid-air. Thousands of rats scampering viciously below; others climbing with drawn teeth onto the wings. Airboy standing in the cockpit, his fists flailing at maddened rodents. A full-moon riding high in the sky and outlining hordes of bats descending in scalloped-wing attack to aid their four-footed brethern. Inside the book itself additional horror as officials dismiss the warning of a Professor that world-wide attack by the furry terrors is imminent. Outside Webster Heights, New Jersey, the attack becomes a reality as telephone-line repairmen find cables chewed upon and in making the discovery are attacked by a squeaking, snarling horde. "They Won't Get Me! Jump Joe! It's Easier Than AHHHGGGGHH!," screams one lineman jumping to his death, while atop the phone pole his companion is devoured by a black mass of writhing bodies.

Only the beginning-for the Rat army by the millions swim the Hudson, clambering bridges and scooting through tunnels preparing to invade New York City. There are too many for humans to turn back, even with fire hoses, flamethrowers and mechanized might.

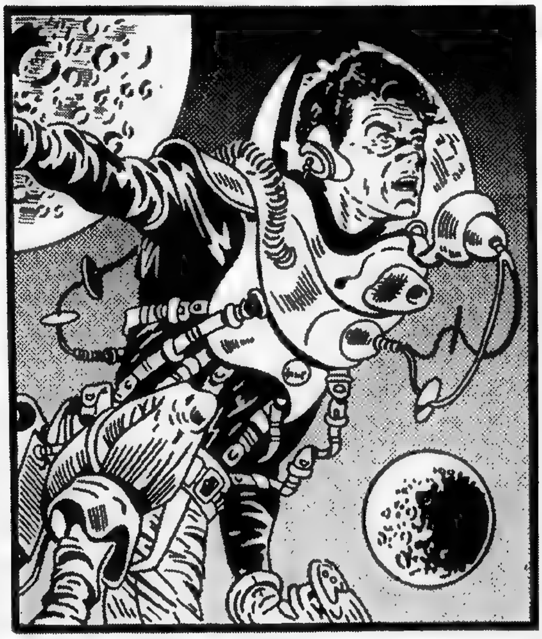
Airboy, with a desperate plan in mind, flies Birdie into the night only to be met by the "RAT AIR FORCE." Millions of wheeling, chittering bats, who by sheer weight of numbers, attempt to down Birdie. Flying directly into the center of a coming storm, Airboy manages to loose his winged pursuers. It is a scene from hell itself that Zolne depicts as Birdie rides streams of mind-wrecking aircurrents and splatterings of lightning. Bats swarm ten-thousand fold, their bodies buffeted; their wings rent by mighty wind. Airboy escapes and leads oil-laden bombers cross a Hudson River that is now a pathway of swimming rats bent on destruction. Oil drums hit water. "In Terried Frenzy, The Invading Rodents Drown By The Millions."

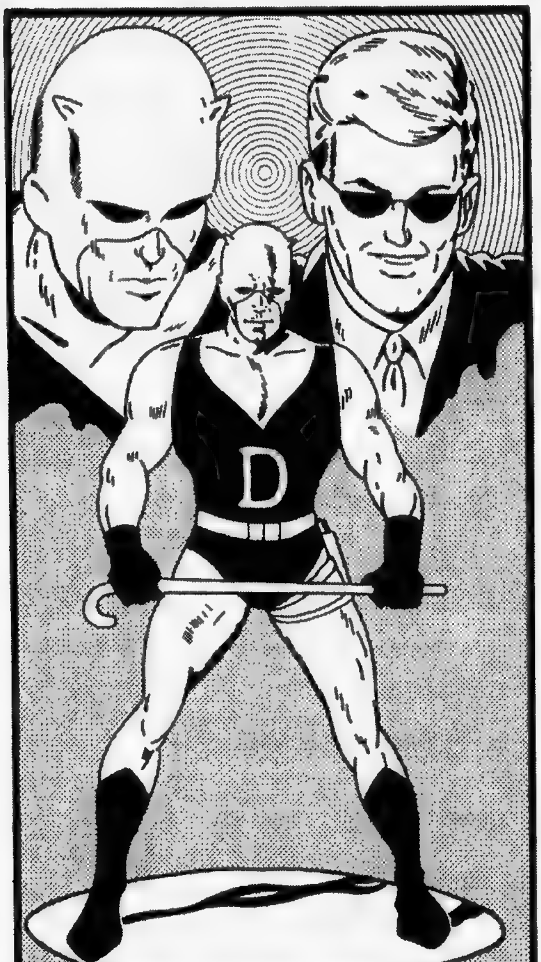
Yet, it is victory only for the moment. Airboy's worst fears are realized in the very next issue (Vol. 5, No. 12) dated January, 1949, as the Rats again strike against the society of man. To end the threat of rodent rule hopefully for all time, Airboy lets himself be captured by the Rats and leads U.S. bombers to the Rat Headquarters. They bomb Grand Culvert Dam and with the resulting flood, the march of the fanged-four-footers is halted. And even then, the world and Airboy wonder how many years it will be before Rats strike again.

Yes, Airboy is gone now. Perhaps, he and Birdie, sometimes, somewhere, still occasionally take to the skies to glide upon midnight winds, passing phantoms of time gone by. Perhaps, they are the shadow, the readers--now grown older--dimly perceive through the rising mists of a sultry, summer night, when time seems like it was so long ago.

Joe Orlando

Art and Article
by
BOB COSGROVE & MARTIN L. GREIM





JOE ORLANDO was born in Bari, Italy on April 4th, 1927. Probably Joe's parents, who migrated to the United States just two years later, little suspected that their son was to become one of the most respected artists and idea-men in the comic art world. They did "start him on the right track" tho', if unintentionally, by settling in New York City, the Vatican of the comics.

Like most artists, Joe began to show his talents at an early age, picking up pen, brush, and more often crayon to become the local DaVinci of his grade school. A veteran of Santa Claus sketches and assembly posters, at nine years old, jolting Joe enrolled in some art classes offered by his neighborhood Boy's Club.

Like so many other top cartoonists in today's comics scene, Joe attended the High School of Industrial Arts, where he studied Illustratio It was here that Joe first met as classmates, many of the people that were to become his future colleagues. After completeing high school, Orlando fell victim to the draft and served his time in the Occupation Army of Europe. Army life had its compensations though, for upon returning to the USA, Joe wasted no time in taking advantage of the G.I. bill, which made it possible for him to attend the Art Students League. In addition, the bill gave Joe the opportunity to attend classes with the noted illustrator Frank Riley, who Joe considers very influential in his own unique approach to comic art.

It was at this time that Joe began doing freelance work for various comic books, notably illoing "Chuck White" for Treasure Chest comics. As Joe's freelance career snowballed, he had the good fortune to become acquainted with famed illustrator Wallace Wood, and soon began working with him. Joe generally assisted with inking and background work, sharing Wood's studio above a Spanish Dance Club.

At this point however, a black page appeared in Joe's illustrating carreer. Disheartened by a bad experiance with an unscrupulous publisher, the disappointed Orlando abandoned comic books in favor of a job as a stock clerk.

Luckilly, Joe relented and soon began slaving over the Wood drawing board once again. Initially, Joe and Wally worked for the Avon Comics group. Most of their efforts were "Avon Fantasy Classics," such as "An Earthman on Venus" and "Space Detective." One of their better productions was "The Mask of Fu Manchu," based, of course, on Sax Rohmer's mysterious oriental archvillain, and featuring such Rohmer characters as Sir Denis Nayland Smith. The ruler of a gigantic secret organization known as the Si-Faan, the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu attempted to steal the mask of "El Mokanna" and a sacred sword. His purpose? To seize control of a fanatic horde--another step designed to give him mastery of the world.

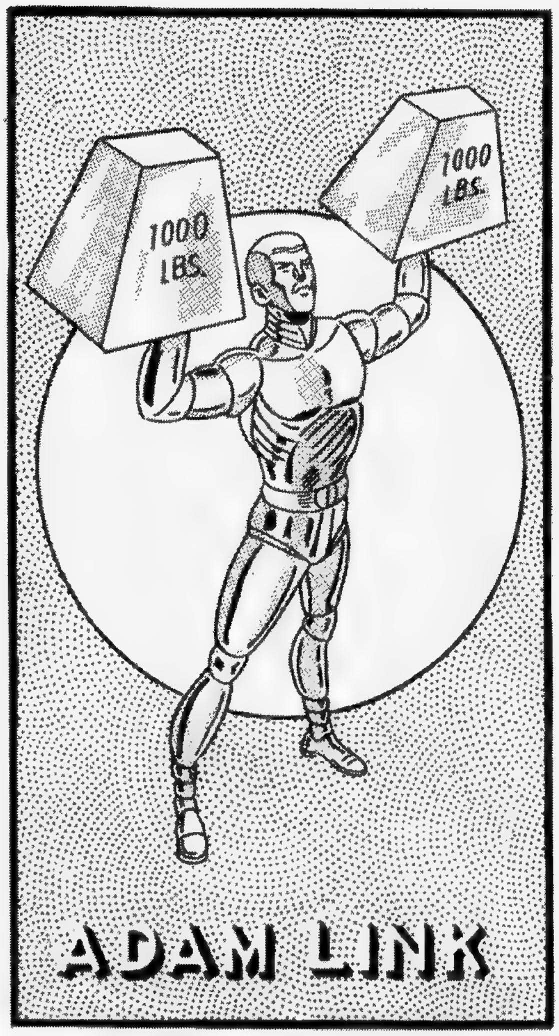
Within the same year or so, the Orlando-Wood team also turned out "Captain Science" for Youthful Magazines. "Captain Science" was in reality Gordon Dane, who remained in his earth laboratory in 1950 for all of three panels in any given story, before zipping into outer space with his kid assistant Rip, and his girlfriend, Luana.

How much of the work was Orlando's, and how much was Wood's, only Joe and Wally know for sure. One thing is sure, however, to even the most casual observor of their early work--the style is very much Wally Wood's, Though not the Wally Wood we know today. Although very, very good, the Wood-Orlando art does not display the tremendous brush technique that is today evident in every Wood-overseen job. The composition is excellent, but somewhat cluttered. The figures, showing both Orlando and Wood influences, and in many cases "stock" Wood poses of today, show an almost sublimal Alex Raymond influence, and the influence of Reed Crandall upon Wood's art is very, very, apparent. While beautiful work, both the Avon and the Youthful efforts were hints of the stylistic mastery yet to come.

And come it did, beginning with the duo's dynamic drawings for the highly respected Entertainment Comics (EC) group, where Wally and Joe worked on just about all the EC books, from horror comics to the new direction VALOR. Here, the inking technique, while never as good as today, became sharper, and the detail became greater even tho' paradoxically, the clutter began to swiftly disappear. Dramatic lighting was a key factor in the elegance and style of the Wood work.

As EC began growing, however, more artists of top caliber were necessary. Even though it meant losing a capable assistant, Wood recommended Joe as the man for the job. It was as a regular EC staffer that Joe finally settled down and got married. His wife, Gloria, still works with the "remnant" of EC, as head of Mad Magazine's stalwart subscription department.

FROM EC TO DC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ADAM LINK

Joe's early solo work at EC is extremely similar to that of Wood's, although not as fantastically detailed as Wood's has now grown. The facial expressions--the inking technique--the composition of the panels--and especially the construction of the figures and treatment of clothes--all were Wally Woodish.

Orlando had learned much from Wood, but he was too much of an individualist to slavishly copy. Soon his inking style softened and became freer--his figures began to lose that carved out, solid look so evident in Wood's work. Faces elongated, and the treatment of mouths changed especially. Joe was fast becoming the individual stylist he is today.

Like his friend and colleague, Joe's first love was EC's pace setting science fiction tales. Pace-setting is truly the word for one story in particular, "Judgement Day". "Judgement Day" was the story of Cybrinia, a world of robots, which was to serve as a "test case." Originally, men had placed a handful of robots there to see if they would develop into a civilization worthy of inclusion in the existing Galactic Empire. On the surface, the robots had done well, creating a 20th century level civilization. But beneath the surface, was a social conflict between orange robots and blue robots. In short, a robot-guised attack on racial discrimination. In 1953, the story was tragically behind the times as they should have been, but to EC's everlasting credit, far ahead of the times as they truly were.

Although equally adept at depicting any type of SF tale, many of Joe's stories were adaptations of the work of top science-fiction writers. Like such greats as Al Williamson and Wally Wood (Will you ever forget Wood's "There Will Come Soft Rains?), Joe adapted several stories from the patron saint of EC's SF line, Ray Bradbury. Two of his best Bradbury adaptations, "The Long Years," and "Outcast of the Stars," were reprinted in TOMMORROW MIDNIGHT, a Balentine paperback containing EC adaptations of stories from Bradbury's works--notably his very famous **MARTIAN CHRONICILES.**

In the last 3 issues of WIERD SCIENCE FANTASY (before it became INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION), Joe created some of his most memorable work for EC--an adaptation of Otto Binder's "Adam Link-Robot", an important novel of historical importance in the Science Fiction field. The story of Adam Link was the story of a metal man of bolts and wires, far more human than many of his flesh and blood colleagues. When an accident caused the death of his creator and friend, the robot who could think like a man found himself accused of murder. Instantly, people assumed he was a Frankenstein. Fortunatly however, people like Jack Hall, reporter, and Thomas Link, lawyer and nephew of Adam's inventor, were on hand to prevent the rest of humanity from making a tragic mistake.

In this early, superbly illustrated version of Adam, Joe Orlando achieved a sensetive portrayal of the human robot. The one flaw, however, was the elongated head he endowed Adam with, which tended to distort the portrayal of Adam's human emotions.

But, because the world is an imperfect world, all good times come to an end, and all good things eventually meet destruction. So it was with what many people consider to be the finest comics group that has ever existed. In 1955, crushed by censorship, EC died. The talent that made it the company that it was, split up--some going to work for other companies, some freelancing, others going into more profitable realms of art.

Joe Orlando chose to return to the world of the freelance artist. EC was gone, but the field was still ripe for talent. Over at Classics Illustrated, Orlando produced several stories, notably "A Tale of Two Cities," and "Julius Caesar."

Another market quick to capitalize on Joe's titantic talents was the Atlas Comic Group, forerunner of today's highly celebrated Marvel Comics Group. Recognizing Joe's flair for fantasy and Science-Fiction, Atlas lost no time in assigning him to their wide range of fantasy titles, including MYSTIC, WORLD OF FANTASY, ASTONISHING, and MARVEL [illegible]

Joe's work during his stay at Atlas is extremely interesting. In some cases, his art bears a strong resemblence to that of his EC period. In some stories, Joe seems to be experimenting with his style, while in still other stories, the art is extremely similar to Joe's contemporary work. All of the Atlas stories were very well done. In them, Joe demonstrates exceptional skill in silhouette work and the portrayal of [illegible]. A good example of this is "Deadlock!" in WORLD OF FANTASY

Plotwise, Joe's script material left something to be desired. Unlike such claims as "A MYSTERY TALE to hold you Breathless," the stories proved a quick cure for insomnia, with rather predictable plots. Most dealt with the misuse of some amazing scientific invention or discovery.

In addition to his work with Atlas, Joe began doing more and more work with MAD Magazine. Joe's work at MAD is unfortunatly not representative of the type of work he is capable of. Usually, his art is hampered by very poor material, of the type that has caused many to bemoan the decline of the magazine. His recent work illustrates this admirably. Joe has been stuck with "MAD Interviews...so and so, etc," a feature that at best qualifys as mildly humorous. Worse still has been his assignment to "Magazines for Special Professions," such as "Free-Loader Magazine," which certainly qualifies as one of the most humorless humor features ever to appear on the printed page.

At the same time, Joe also tried his hand at some advertising work, including a booklet on vitamins assisted by another EC artist, Roy G. Krenkel, well known to many ERB readers for his illustrations for Ace's ERB Martian series.

Around 1964, Warren Publications decided to venture into the comic publishing business. Warren, however created a comic book with a difference--CREEPY MAGAZINE, a slick cover, 35¢, black and white magazine, dealing with horror and using improved methods of reproduction, allowing wash and other varied special effects. This exciting company attracted some of the top names in the business--Frazetta, Colan, Crandall, Ditko, Mastroserio, Morrow, Torres, Craig, Severin, Williamson, and Wood, to name a few. One of the first people contracted was Joe Orlando, who in addition to contributing story ideas, turned out some very fine art, utilizing both wash and line drawing.

Exceptionally well drawn horror stories (and one or two poorer efforts) marked Joe's stay at Warren. "Return Trip!", in CREEPY #3 is an excellent example of Joe's outstanding draftsmanship. "Vampire Slayer!", in EERIE #5 (CREEPY'S companion magazine.) is a dramatic testimonial to Joe's creativity in layout and design.

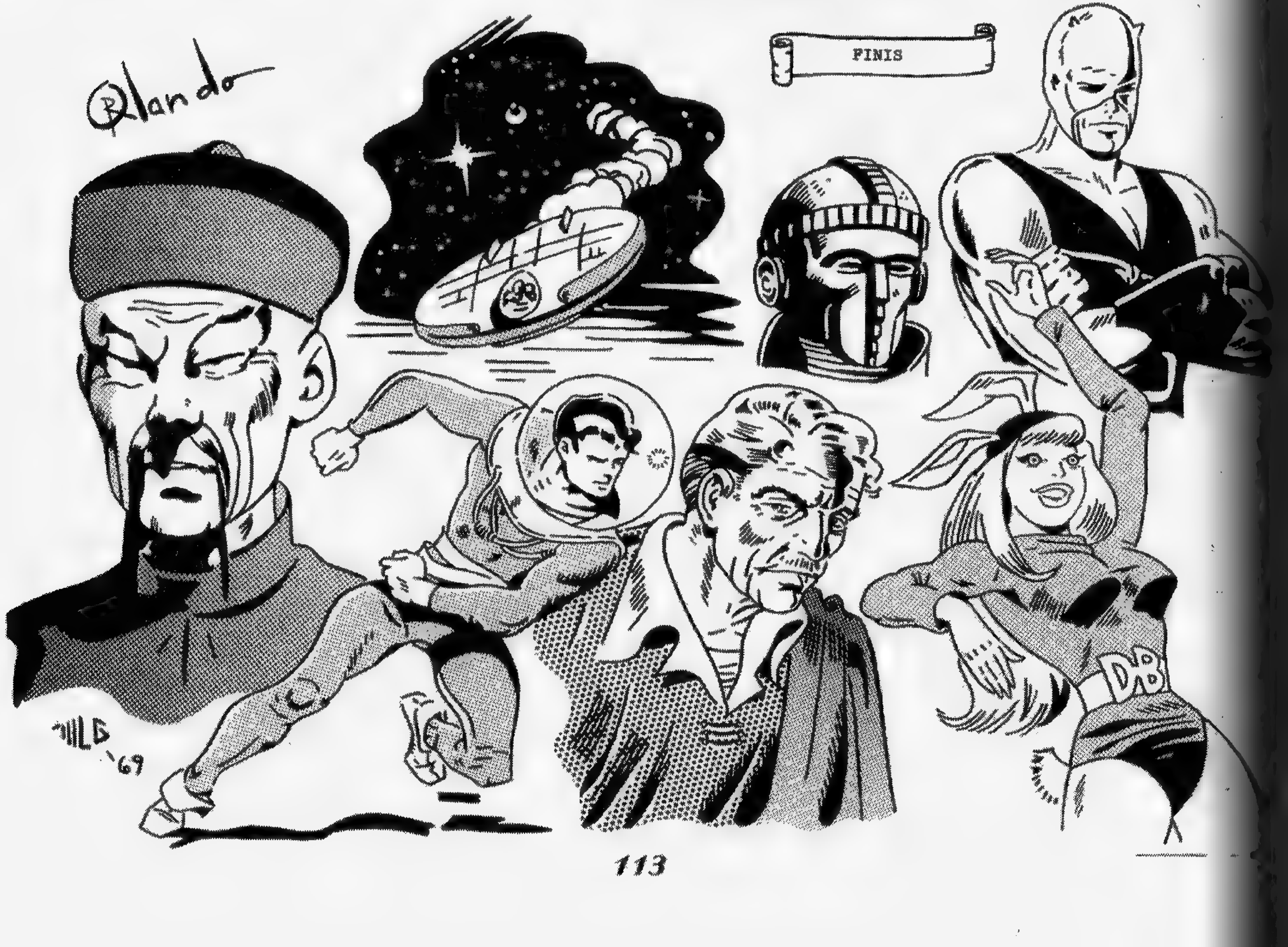
The real "treat" involved in Joe's reunion with an EC-style horror mag, however, was his reunion-- and comicdom's--with another old friend, ADAM LINK, a pleasure heightened by Otto Binder's script adaptation from his original story. Here was Adam, once again, do entirely in a style uniquely Orlando's. And this time, Joe corrected his previous error, giving Adam a more human shaped face, while still retaining enough of a mechanical quality to give Adam a certain aloofness. Fortunatly, Adam's second stay in comics proved more enduring than the last, and his adventures, illoed by Joe Orlando, continued on a semi-regular basis until the departure of Archie Goodwin as WARREN'S editor. Fans of Adam are hoping that in the near future, Warren will see fit to reinstate the series. The artist? Joe Orlando, of course!

While Stan Lee was still ushering in the Marvel Age of Comics, Marvel had ushered in a new character, DAREDEVIL by name. In his first issue, under the fine artistry of that old stylist, Bill Everett, DD got off a flying start. Unfortunatly however, Everett was unable to continue the feature, which fell into the waiti hands of Joe Orlando. Joe's art on this feature was excellent. For three issues, Daredevil battled Electro, the Purple Man, and the OWL. In addition to worthy portrayals of these menaces, Joe turned in a very fine portrayal of the Fantastic Four. Unfortunatly, the one character he didn't turn out a fine portrayal of was Daredevil himself! Why? Who can say. No one, includi Joe's old buddy Wally Wood, seemed able to draw DD's seemingly simple costume with the same charm that Everet could. When Wally took the feature over, he finally gave up and redesigned DD's costume completely. Then again, part of the responsibility may lie with Joe's inker on the feature, Vince Colleta.

With issue #62 of Showcase, Joe Orlando turned up at DC. This was the origin issue of DC's humor magazin "The Inferior Five". Though in later issues the art wen downhill, Joe Orlando's version, in the first issue, wa outstanding. His portrayal of The Inferior Five vs. Dr. Gruesome, although humorous, also had a quality abo it reminiscent of the action heroes of the '40's - dark shading and abreviated backgrounds.

At any rate, with Carmine Infantino's promotion to Editorial Director of NPP, Orlando became an editor, where he brings the same talent and skill to the titles he edits, as he does to his art. Joe's fans can only hope that in addition to his editorial chores at DC, the multi-talented Mr. Orlando will find time to do some comic strips as well.

FINIS



DONNA'S DOODLES

Miss Donna L. Astin is the topic for this issues Ama-CONtributor spot. Though the title of this article is "Donna's Doodles", her art is far from doodling. Rather, it is a splendid sample of artistic interpretation. Donna is one of the few female fans who can draw and she has a style all her own.

I became acquainted with Donna through Bob Cosgrove, editor of Champion. Donna had done some work for him and I was so impressed I asked if she would also work for me. I'm in her debt that she said yes. The Hawkman drawing, on this page, is the first super-hero drawing she has had in print. 'Till now, her art has been confined to science fiction and sword & sorcery, but since this publication is basically super-hero oriented I asked her to do a hero drawing and to say the least I thought the end result terrific.

In keeping with my policy of spotlighting some of fandoms more talented fans; I put the following questions to Donna, so you could get to know her better.

M.G. How did you first become interested in comics?

D.A. Being both a reader and an artist for a very long time, comics were and are a natural source of enjoyment for me. I got into the serious world of comic fandom quite by accident, as I was searching for the film-based comic "Master of the World" and had to get in touch with private collectors in my search. I finally was able to obtain a copy from Larry Herndon, a noted fan. I also got a sketch published once in "Creepy", and I assume that this is where Bob Cosgrove "found" me. He and you are almost totally responsible for rekindling my interest in this field.

M.G. Do you have any hobbies?

D.A. So far as hobbies go, I have quite a few and I don't know where to start. I'm chiefly a collector: books (mostly on art), stamps (mostly foreign), records (mostly orchestral), pets (mostly hamsters), photos (mostly of Vincent Price). I am interested in cars, both for mechanics and styling (chiefly Fords), and am extremely fond of drawing and painting mythological or fantastic creatures. This is probably my greatest hobby.

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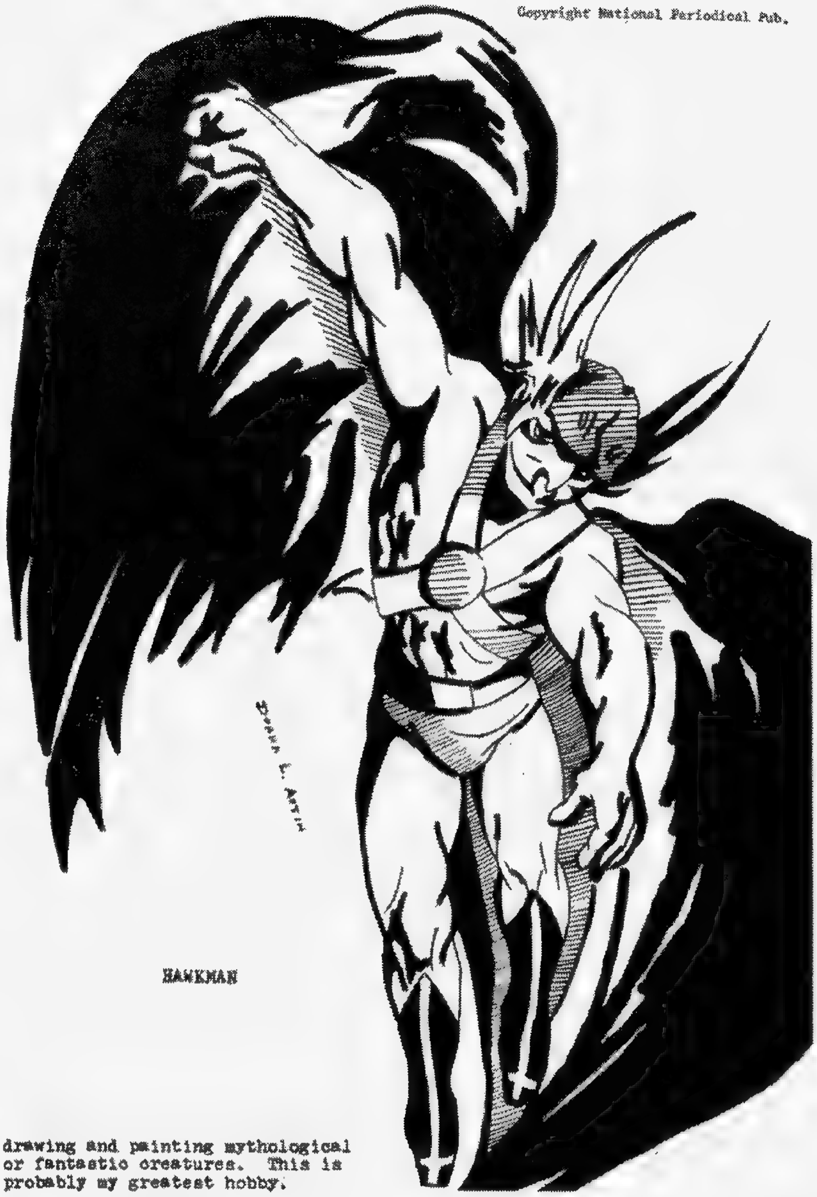


HAWKMAN

M.G. Do you have a favorite super-hero?

D.A. I like Namor, The Sub-Mariner best and Thor second. Possible reasons why are: Namor is Spock-like (or Spock is Namor-like) and Namor is semi-human or fantastic. I have a sympathetic passion for super-semi-human animals too. Too bad Atomic Mouse is gone, I really liked him.

M.G. Do you have any favorite ama- super heroes?

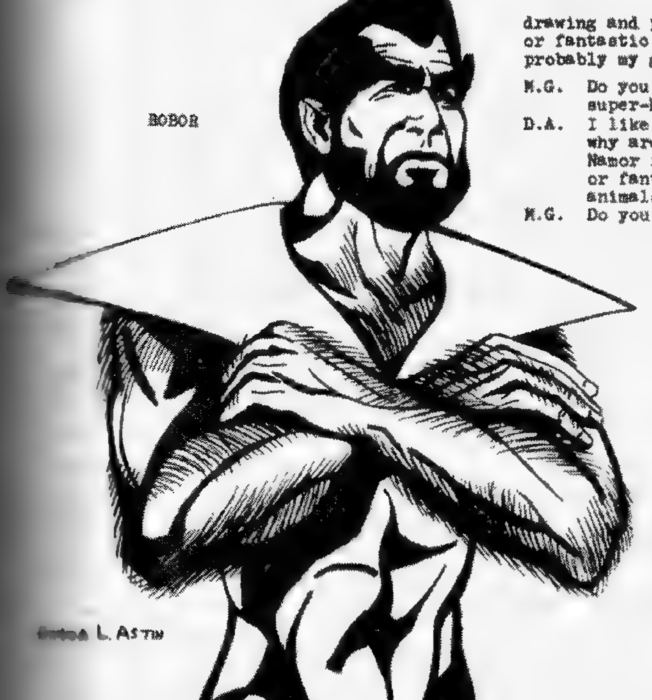
D.A. I'm not that familiar with ama-super heroes, but of what I've seen, I like Xal-Kor, the Human Cat, for the same reasons I like Prince Namor.

M.G. Who is your favorite comic artist?

D.A. Definitely Angelo Tories! Frank Frazetta follows a close second, and whoever inks Namor for Marvel Comics. (I believe you're refering to John Buscema inked by Dan Adkins, Donna. - MLG) Angelo Tories has a good clean style which, although matched by Al Williamson, is apart from his by being bolder and heavier.

And so my interview with Donna Astin comes to a close. I hope it gave you fans some insight into the background of one of fandom's top female artists. You'll be seeing more of Donna's work in future issues of The Comic Crusader. I feel fortunate to have her as a regular contributor to this publication.

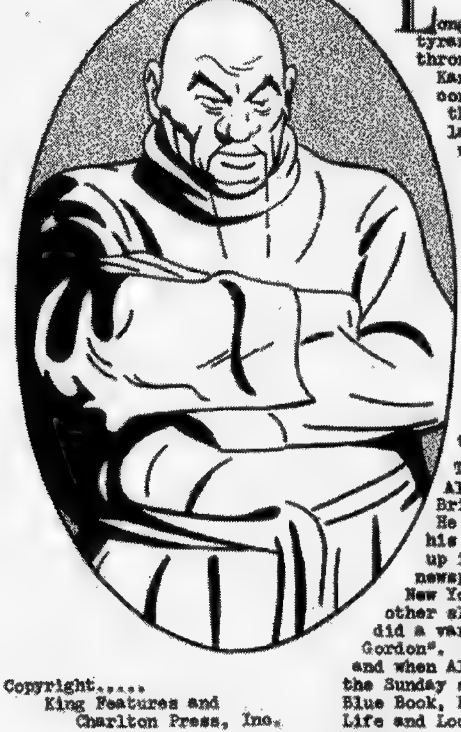
BOBOR



MONGO MANIA
#6.

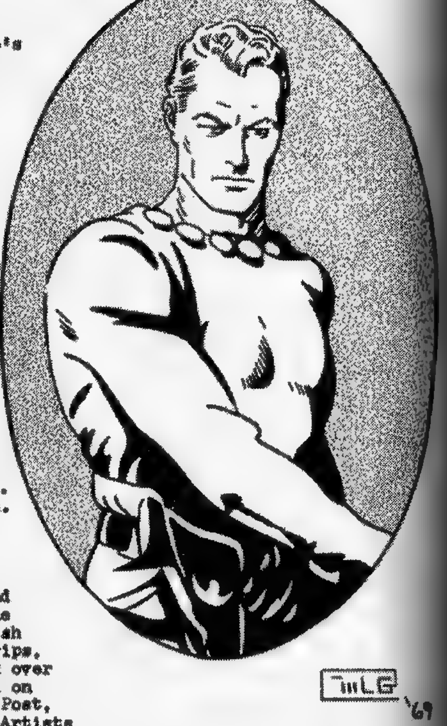
KANG

Art and Article
by
MARTIN L. GREIM



Long after FLASH GORDON overthrew Mongo's tyrant MING, another evil pretender to Mongo's throne appeared. His name...KANG the CRUEL. Kang tried to take over Mongo by gaining control of its Atom power. Flash foiled this plot and drove Kang into the wastelands of Mongo. There Kang became the wizard king of the Fur-Men. Flash followed him, but once again Kang eluded him and almost killed him by firing an atom charge into the Fur-Men's village - destroying it. Flash came to grips with Kang again, in Kang's undersea fortress. There he, Dale Arden and Techno (Kang's chief scientist) managed to destroy the city by causing stores of "Mongonium" to blow up in a tremendous atomic explosion, after they had rocketed through the fortresses sea dome. Finally, the strain of defeat, drove Kang out of his mind. A fitting end for an evil tyrant.

The art, for the most part, was not by Alex Raymond, but rather by Austin Briggs. Briggs was born in 1909 near Humbolt, Minn. He has had many imitators, but has kept his work fresh and contemporary. He grew up in Detroit and began illustrating for newspapers. After a few years, he came to New York and worked for Collier's Magazine and other slick magazines. During the Depression he did a variety of work from movie posters to "Flash Gordon". Briggs worked on Flash Gordon daily strips, and when Alex Raymond was drafted in 1944, he took over the Sunday strips as well. Since then, he's worked on Blue Book, Redbook, Cosmopolitan, Saturday Evening Post, Life and Look. Austin Briggs is now on the Famous Artists staff.



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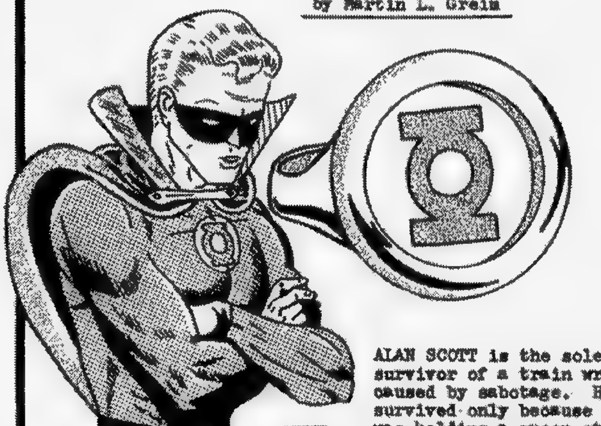
THE DAYS OF THE J.S.A. #2

FEATURING:

GREEN LANTERN

by Martin L. Greim



ALAN SCOTT is the sole survivor of a train wreck caused by sabotage. He survived only because he was holding a green storm lantern that had been part of the trains fixtures. He finds that this green lantern is a battery of power, created from a huge meteor that had crashed in ancient China. The lantern instructs Scott to fashion a ring from its metal and that by touching the ring to the green lantern, every 24 hours, the ring will be charged with great power. Power to protect him from all but wood.

Scott uses this power to bring the sabateurs of the train to justice. After completing his first mission, he creates a costume and names himself after the source of his power.....THE GREEN LANTERN.

(*Note...In Green Lantern's early days, the ring only protected him from metal.)

Green Lantern was a charter member of THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA. When he first met with the other members, he told them of how he broke up a crime syndicate and exposed a crime czar who had framed Commissioner Mason.

His first actual mission with the JSA involved him in a plot, by the Germans, to jam all of America's radio frequencies. This was to be accomplished from a dirigible, camoflaged by clouds. Green Lantern finds the great balloon and after a battle with the Germans aboard, destroys it...thus ending the menace.

With issue #7 of All Star Comics, Green Lantern became the chairman of the Justice Society. In this adventure he and his fellow members, raised $1,000,000 for war orphans. This issue also marked his taking a leave of absence from the JSA. Green Lantern had been given his own book and wouldn't appear in the JSA again until issue #24.

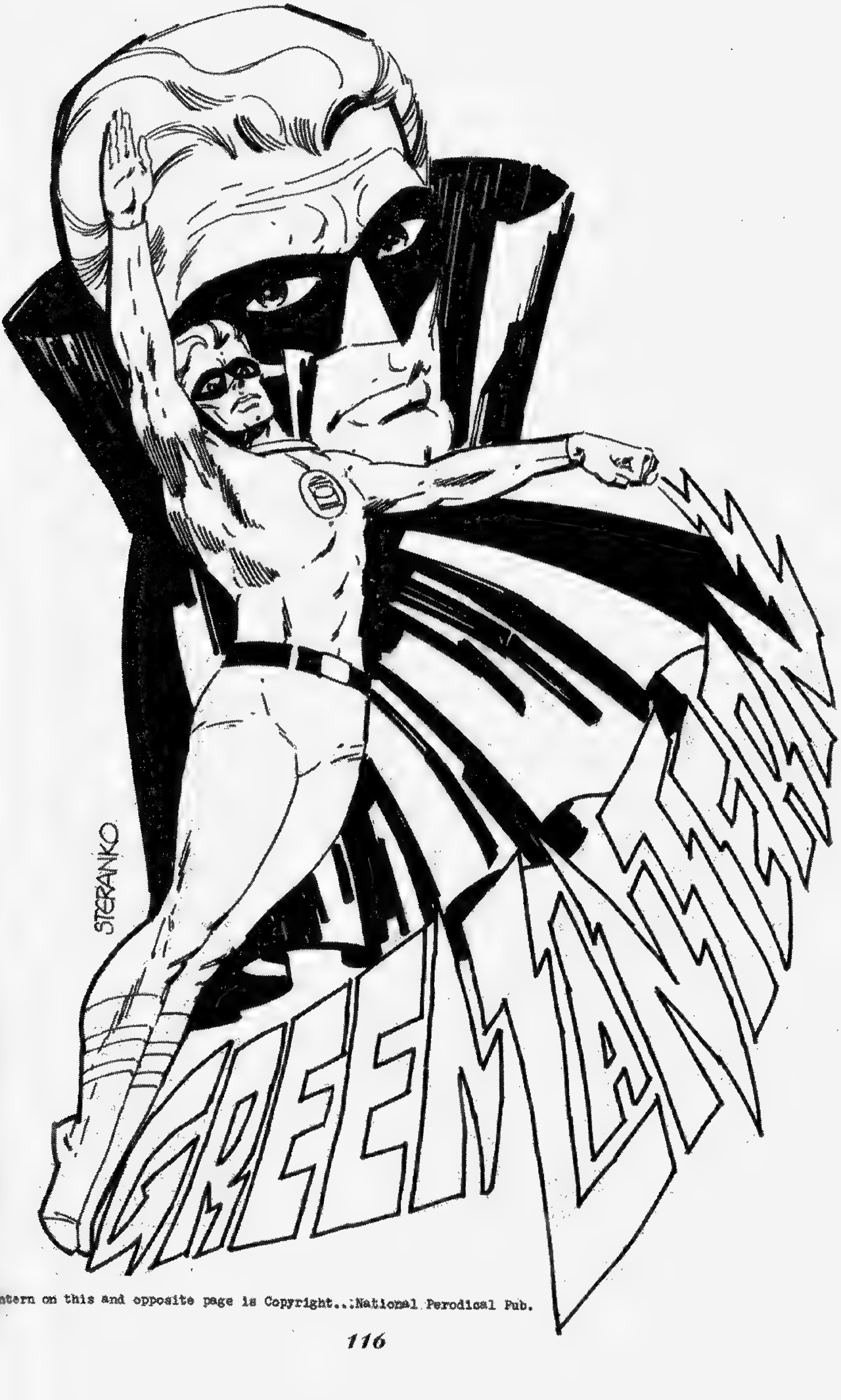
This issue was a patriotic issue, in which the JSA proved to a young American the war like nature of Germany. G. L. was so moved by this adventure, that he became an active member once more.

Of all the members of The Justice Society, Green Lantern has saved them from defeat the most times.

It was his ring that enabled the JSA to go back in time and correct the changes DEGATON had caused in history. (All Star #35.) It was Green Lantern who saved the day when all the other "All Stars" had been captured by the INJUSTICE SOCIETY OF THE WORLD in All Star #37. It was also G. L., aided by Black Canary, who freed the JSA from a hypnotic spell, when they fought the Injustice Society again in issue #41. With issue #52, "The Secret Conquest of Earth", Green Lantern used his ring to protect his fellow members from the hypnotic powers of THE FOUR KINGS. In "The Man Who Conquered the Solar System", it was G. L. who freed the JSA from the helmets of THE CONQUEROR. In this story, he not only fought menaces of two worlds, but the mind dominated Justice Society as well.

No telling of Green Lantern's participation in the Justice Society would be complete without mentioning "The Revenge of Solomon Grundy". In All Star #38 this macabre menace battled each member of the JSA while on his way across country to find his mortal enemy.......Green Lantern. It finally took the combined might of the JSA and G. L.'s power ring to exile Solomon Grundy to the moon.

Although Green Lantern was part of a team, he was a loner too. When the Justice Society split into teams, as a rule he would go off on his own. Whether it was because he was the odd man (The JSA had 7 members at this time) or because he was the most powerful, is not known. However, one thing is certain, Green Lantern was a powerful force in the Justice Society of America.


GREEN LANTERN
STERANKO

[illegible] Lantern on this and opposite page is Copyright..:National Perodical Pub.

FANDOM'S FINEST

by BOB COSGROVE

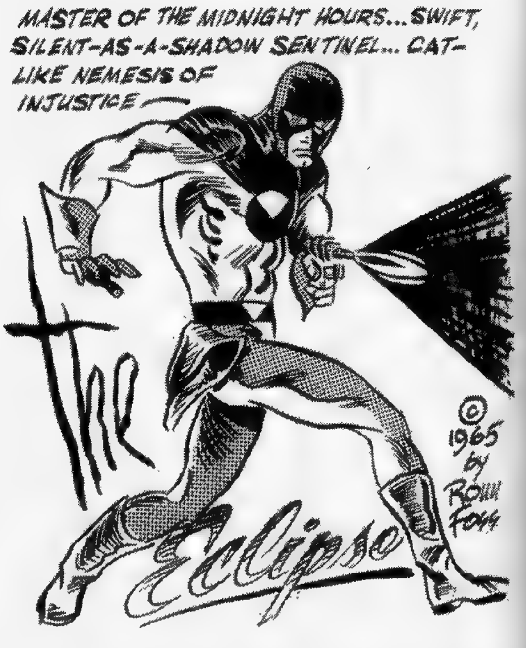
with a forward by: Martin L. Greim

It has been stated before, that this column is to highlight and review the best of fandom's efforts in the amateur hero field.

Although both Bob Cosgrove and I have personal involvement in our own ama-heroes, we both have favorites besides them. The ama-hero Bob reviews this issue is mine.

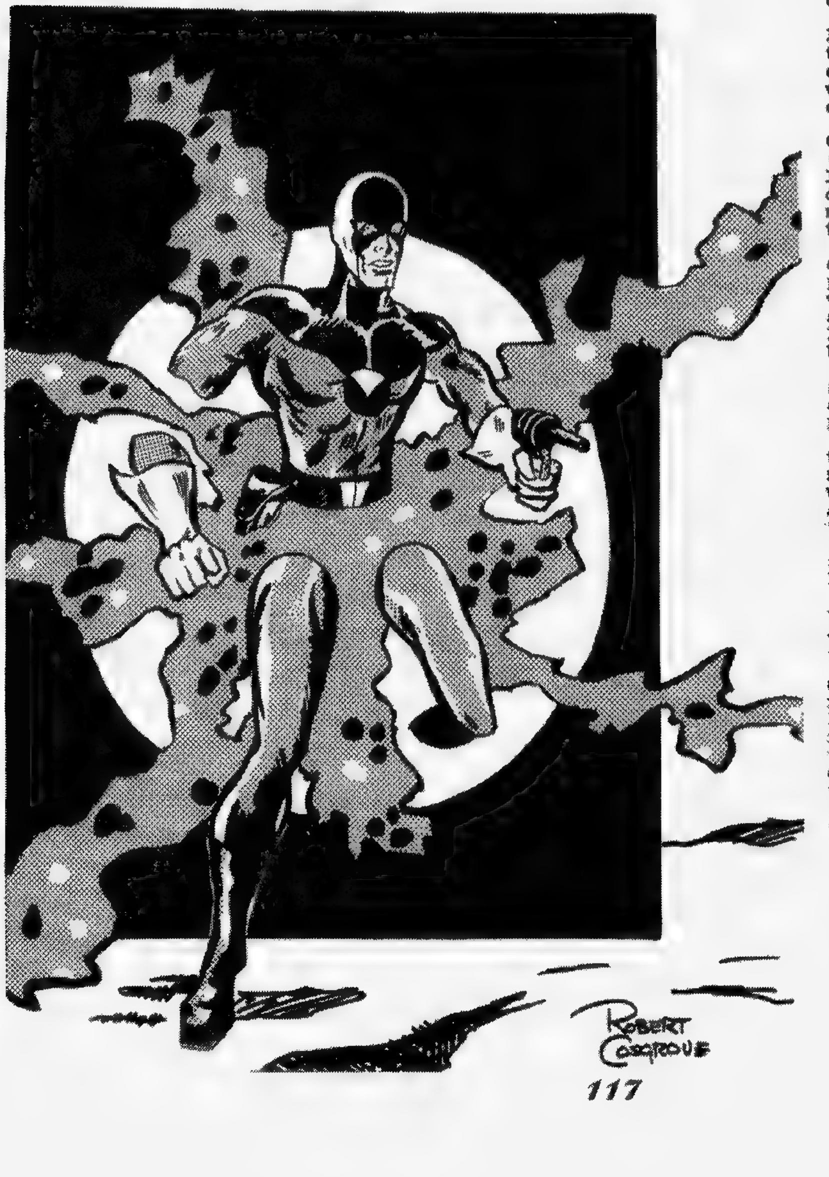
Ever since I became acquainted with fandom, some years back, The ECLIPSE has stayed in my mind as one of fandom's better ama-hero efforts. When I first thought of publishing a fanzine, I said to myself, "Boy! Wouldn't it be great if I could have an ECLIPSE by Foss". Now, at last, I have.

So you see, each of us who is ama-hero conscious has his own hang-up and the ECLIPSE by Foss is mine. - MLG


MASTER OF THE MIDNIGHT HOURS... SWIFT, SILENT-AS-A-SHADOW SENTINEL... CAT-LIKE NEMESIS OF INJUSTICE —
The Eclipse
© 1965 by RONN FOSS

The last issue of All-American Comics brought death to many fine characters--not the worst of these was a hero called Dr. Mid-Nite.

A decade later, the "fanzine" phenomena sprung up, marking the graves of fallen costumed heroes with ditto, mimeo, and on occasion, photo-offset memorials. Most memorials took the form of articles, reminiscencing on those "nostalgic days", or angirly calling for the return of The Hawk. One memorial, however, was an actual re-incarnation of his predecessor--in the footsteps of blind Dr. McNider, came Dr. Craig Prince--"Master of the Midnight Hours"-- Silent, Swift-as-a-Shadow - Sentinal of a great city--Cat-like Nemesis of Injustice--"......THE ECLIPSE!



The Eclipse, launched with the blessings of DC editor Julius Schwartz, first appeared in Alter-Ego #5 - written by Drury Moroz and drawn by Ronn Foss.

The origin story related how, when Dr. Craig Pierce refused to give radium to a gang of thugs, they attempted to murder him in a faked lab explosion. Miraculously, Craig lived, but developed extreme chronic light sensitivity. In other words, Craig was blinded for life.

"Discharged from the hospital, however, Craig--(soon discovered) that his condition--(was) far from a complete liability." By the light of day, he was totally blind, but in darkness, he could see perfectly. And with the night, came strange powers--the ability to pass through solid matter and to become invisible.

Inevitably, Craig made the decision to become a crime fighter. "To augment his new found powers, he devised a number of ingenious inventions--" infra red goggles to allow him to see in daylight and, using the principle of the laser beam, a gun that emits a pure opaque blackness.

One of Craig's more interesting contraptions was a special suit. When Craig opened his specially constructed belt-buckle, exposing the photo cell beneath, the suit became a costume.

Not unsurprisingly, Craig used his powers to capture the criminals who caused his blindness. At the end of the story, a complication was introduced--the welfare board sent Teresa Aster, a beautiful nurse, to care for the "invalid" Dr. Pierce.

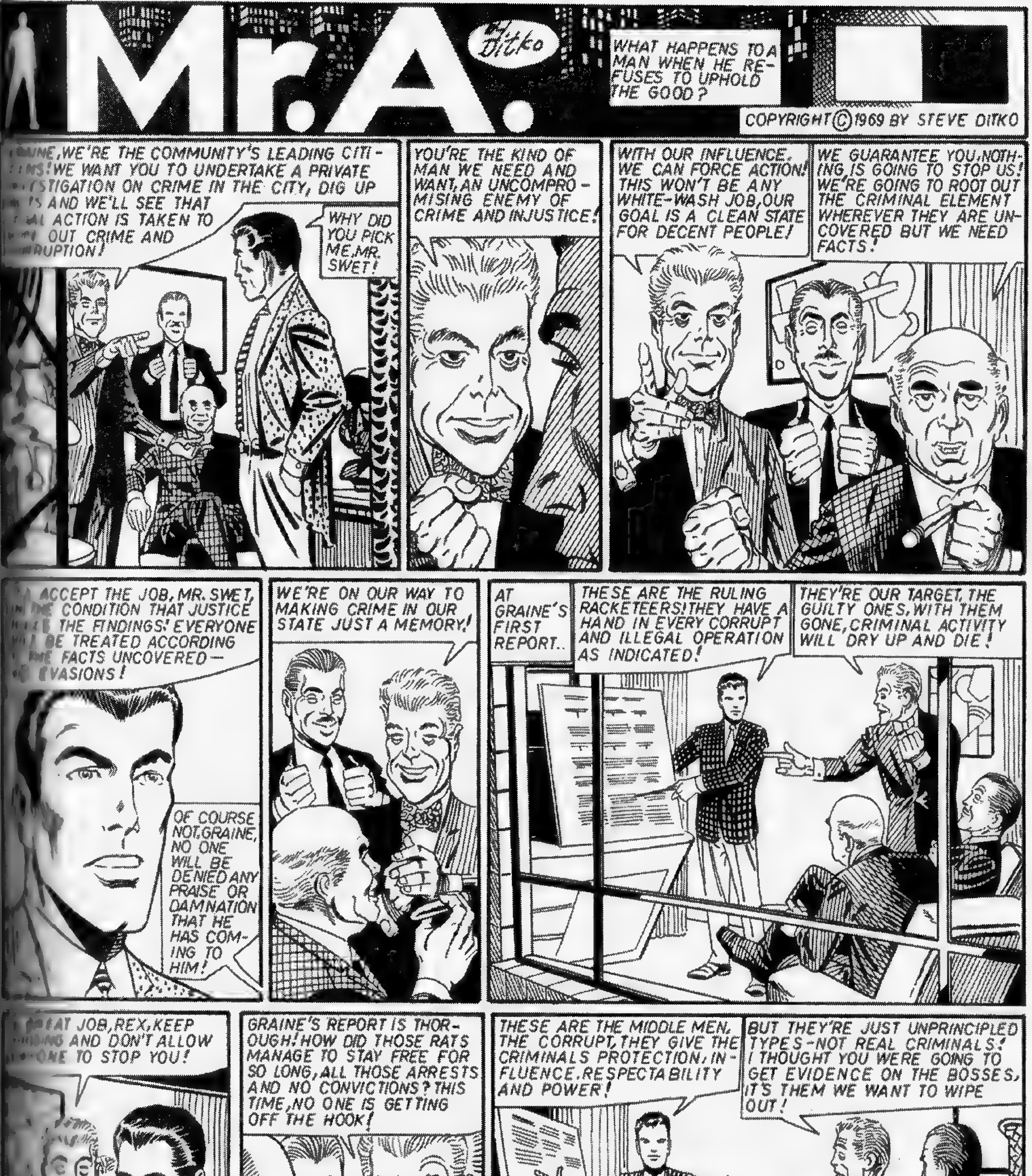
The origin story was an excellent one, in spite of the fact that much of the dialogue seemed almost "lifted" from Batman.

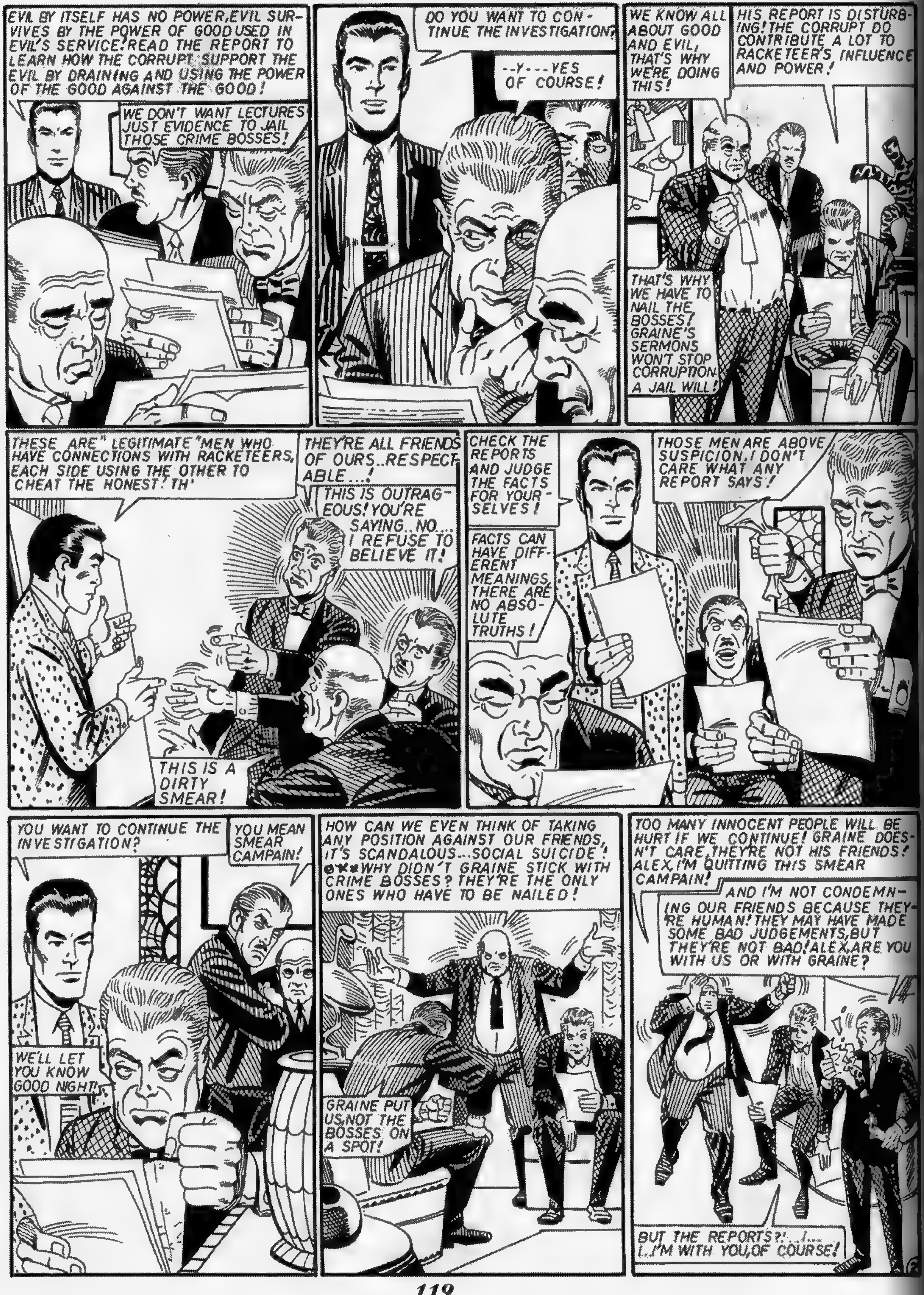
In his second adventure (In Alter Ego #8), the Eclipse exposed a "Haunted House" plot. Altho not as good as the origin story, the sequel was a good one.

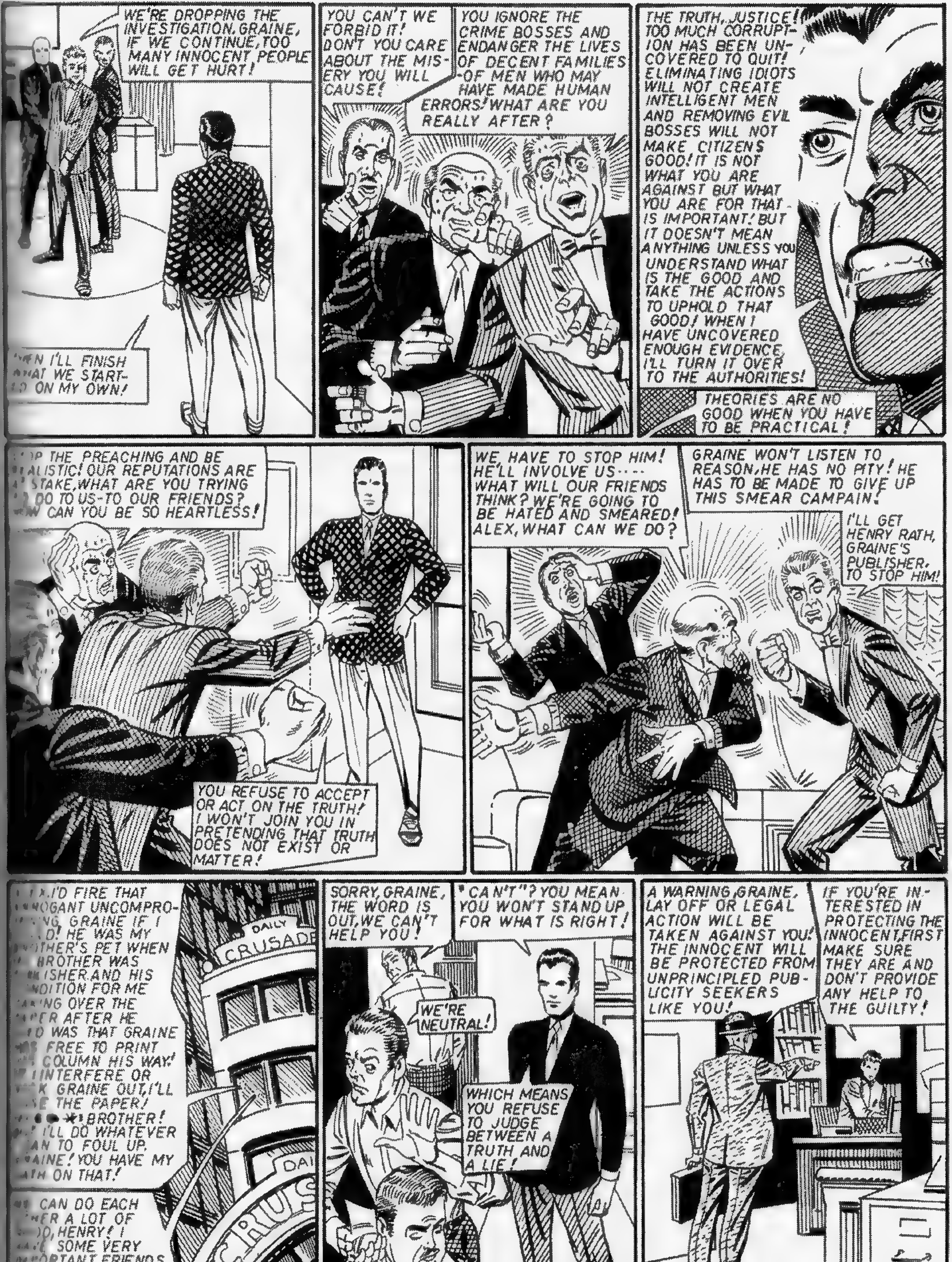
Garbed in striking costume, and armed with a daringly original weapon, the Eclipse was a far more important contribution to fandom than Dr. Mid-Nite was to prodom. Unfortunatly, for fandom, the Eclipse's adventures have been too few and far between. For the next appearance of this dynamic hero, drawn by the talented Ronn Foss, we (or our decendants) will just have to await a future issue of Alter-Ego. Or perhaps--The Comic Crusader?

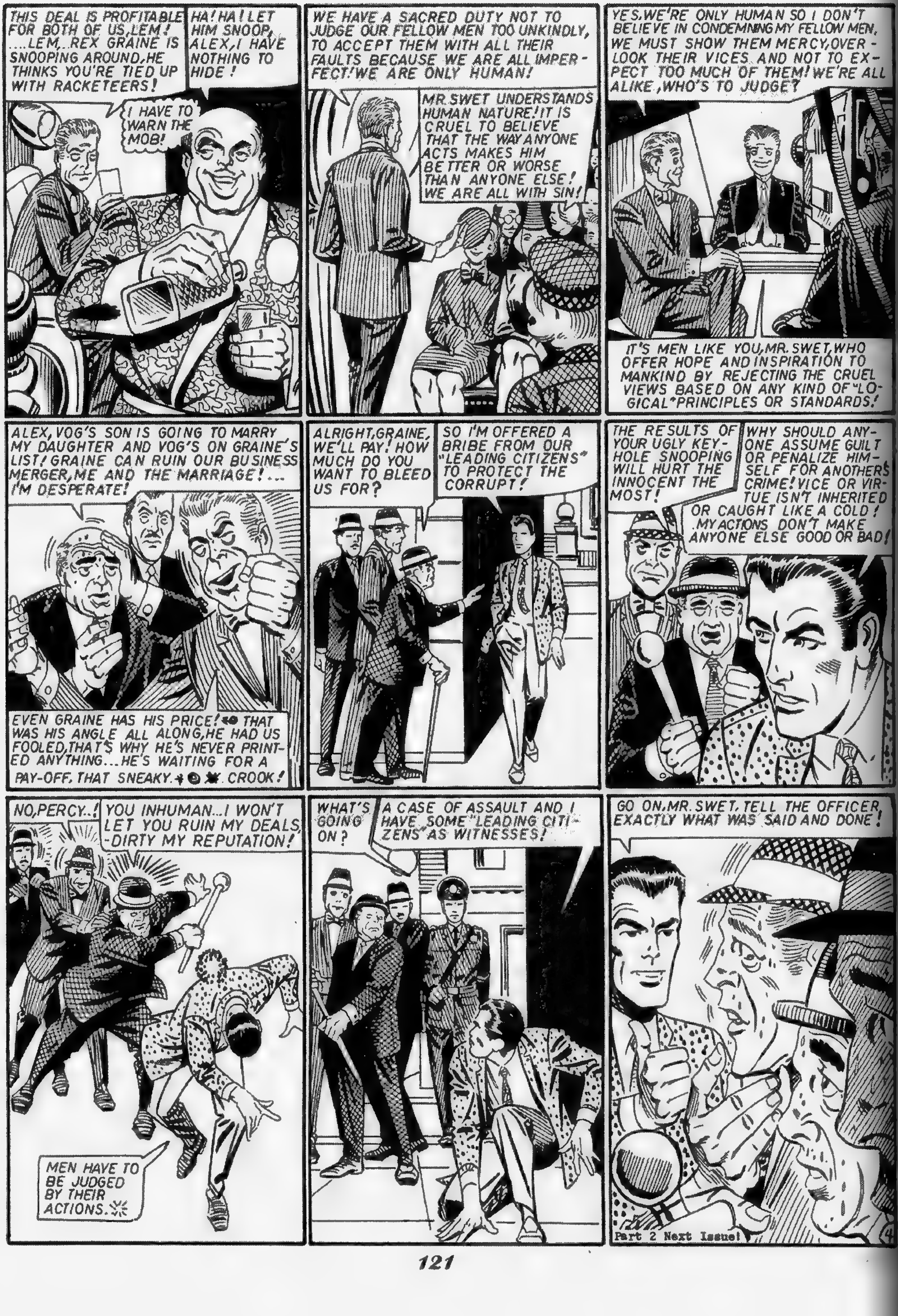
Bob Cosgrove, fandom's ama-hero reviewer, will be back next issue. Why not drop Bob a card or letter suggesting the ama-hero you'ld like to see reviewed.

His address is: BOB COSGROVE
58 MASS. AVE
BRAINTREE, MASS.
02185.


Mr. A.
by Ditko
WHAT HAPPENS TO A MAN WHEN HE REFUSES TO UPHOLD THE GOOD?
COPYRIGHT © 1969 BY STEVE DITKO
GRAINE, WE'RE THE COMMUNITY'S LEADING CITIZENS! WE WANT YOU TO UNDERTAKE A PRIVATE INVESTIGATION ON CRIME IN THE CITY, DIG UP FACTS AND WE'LL SEE THAT LEGAL ACTION IS TAKEN TO WIPE OUT CRIME AND CORRUPTION!
WHY DID YOU PICK ME, MR. SWET!
YOU'RE THE KIND OF MAN WE NEED AND WANT, AN UNCOMPROMISING ENEMY OF CRIME AND INJUSTICE!
WITH OUR INFLUENCE, WE CAN FORCE ACTION! THIS WON'T BE ANY WHITE-WASH JOB, OUR GOAL IS A CLEAN STATE FOR DECENT PEOPLE!
WE GUARANTEE YOU, NOTHING IS GOING TO STOP US! WE'RE GOING TO ROOT OUT THE CRIMINAL ELEMENT WHEREVER THEY ARE UNCOVERED BUT WE NEED FACTS!
I'LL ACCEPT THE JOB, MR. SWET, ON THE CONDITION THAT JUSTICE RULES THE FINDINGS! EVERYONE WILL BE TREATED ACCORDING TO THE FACTS UNCOVERED — NO EVASIONS!
OF COURSE NOT, GRAINE, NO ONE WILL BE DENIED ANY PRAISE OR DAMNATION THAT HE HAS COMING TO HIM!
WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO MAKING CRIME IN OUR STATE JUST A MEMORY!
AT GRAINE'S FIRST REPORT..
THESE ARE THE RULING RACKETEERS! THEY HAVE A HAND IN EVERY CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL OPERATION AS INDICATED!
THEY'RE OUR TARGET, THE GUILTY ONES. WITH THEM GONE, CRIMINAL ACTIVITY WILL DRY UP AND DIE!
GREAT JOB, REX, KEEP DIGGING AND DON'T ALLOW ANYONE TO STOP YOU!
GRAINE'S REPORT IS THOROUGH! HOW DID THOSE RATS MANAGE TO STAY FREE FOR SO LONG, ALL THOSE ARRESTS AND NO CONVICTIONS? THIS TIME, NO ONE IS GETTING OFF THE HOOK!
THESE ARE THE MIDDLE MEN, THE CORRUPT, THEY GIVE THE CRIMINALS PROTECTION, INFLUENCE, RESPECTABILITY AND POWER!
BUT THEY'RE JUST UNPRINCIPLED TYPES - NOT REAL CRIMINALS! I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO GET EVIDENCE ON THE BOSSES, IT'S THEM WE WANT TO WIPE OUT!
YOU HAVE TO SEE THE WHOLE CRIME STRUCTURE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT SUPPORTS AND GIVES EVIL ITS DESTRUCTIVE POWER!
BAH! THE ONLY EVIL IS THE CRIME LEADERS!
1.


EVIL BY ITSELF HAS NO POWER, EVIL SURVIVES BY THE POWER OF GOOD USED IN EVIL'S SERVICE! READ THE REPORT TO LEARN HOW THE CORRUPT SUPPORT THE EVIL BY DRAINING AND USING THE POWER OF THE GOOD AGAINST THE GOOD!
WE DON'T WANT LECTURES JUST EVIDENCE TO JAIL THOSE CRIME BOSSES!
DO YOU WANT TO CONTINUE THE INVESTIGATION?
--Y---YES OF COURSE!
WE KNOW ALL ABOUT GOOD AND EVIL, THAT'S WHY WE'RE DOING THIS!
HIS REPORT IS DISTURBING! THE CORRUPT DO CONTRIBUTE A LOT TO RACKETEER'S INFLUENCE AND POWER!
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO NAIL THE BOSSES! GRAINE'S SERMONS WON'T STOP CORRUPTION- A JAIL WILL!
THESE ARE "LEGITIMATE" MEN WHO HAVE CONNECTIONS WITH RACKETEERS, EACH SIDE USING THE OTHER TO CHEAT THE HONEST! TH'
THEY'RE ALL FRIENDS OF OURS..RESPECTABLE...!
THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS! YOU'RE SAYING..NO... I REFUSE TO BELIEVE IT!
THIS IS A DIRTY SMEAR!
CHECK THE REPORTS AND JUDGE THE FACTS FOR YOURSELVES!
FACTS CAN HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS, THERE ARE NO ABSOLUTE TRUTHS!
THOSE MEN ARE ABOVE SUSPICION, I DON'T CARE WHAT ANY REPORT SAYS!
YOU WANT TO CONTINUE THE INVESTIGATION?
YOU MEAN SMEAR CAMPAIN!
WE'LL LET YOU KNOW GOOD NIGHT!
HOW CAN WE EVEN THINK OF TAKING ANY POSITION AGAINST OUR FRIENDS, IT'S SCANDALOUS...SOCIAL SUICIDE! @*✱WHY DIDN'T GRAINE STICK WITH CRIME BOSSES? THEY'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO HAVE TO BE NAILED!
GRAINE PUT US, NOT THE BOSSES ON A SPOT!
TOO MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE WILL BE HURT IF WE CONTINUE! GRAINE DOESN'T CARE, THEY'RE NOT HIS FRIENDS! ALEX, I'M QUITTING THIS SMEAR CAMPAIN!
AND I'M NOT CONDEMNING OUR FRIENDS BECAUSE THEY'RE HUMAN! THEY MAY HAVE MADE SOME BAD JUDGEMENTS, BUT THEY'RE NOT BAD! ALEX, ARE YOU WITH US OR WITH GRAINE?
BUT THE REPORTS?!..I... I..I'M WITH YOU, OF COURSE!


WE'RE DROPPING THE INVESTIGATION, GRAINE, IF WE CONTINUE, TOO MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE WILL GET HURT!
N I'LL FINISH AT WE START- ON MY OWN!
YOU CAN'T WE FORBID IT! DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT THE MISERY YOU WILL CAUSE!
YOU IGNORE THE CRIME BOSSES AND ENDANGER THE LIVES OF DECENT FAMILIES -OF MEN WHO MAY HAVE MADE HUMAN ERRORS! WHAT ARE YOU REALLY AFTER?
THE TRUTH, JUSTICE! TOO MUCH CORRUPTION HAS BEEN UNCOVERED TO QUIT! ELIMINATING IDIOTS WILL NOT CREATE INTELLIGENT MEN AND REMOVING EVIL BOSSES WILL NOT MAKE CITIZENS GOOD! IT IS NOT WHAT YOU ARE AGAINST BUT WHAT YOU ARE FOR THAT IS IMPORTANT! BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING UNLESS YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IS THE GOOD AND TAKE THE ACTIONS TO UPHOLD THAT GOOD! WHEN I HAVE UNCOVERED ENOUGH EVIDENCE, I'LL TURN IT OVER TO THE AUTHORITIES!
THEORIES ARE NO GOOD WHEN YOU HAVE TO BE PRACTICAL!
P THE PREACHING AND BE ALISTIC! OUR REPUTATIONS ARE STAKE, WHAT ARE YOU TRYING DO TO US-TO OUR FRIENDS? CAN YOU BE SO HEARTLESS!
YOU REFUSE TO ACCEPT OR ACT ON THE TRUTH! I WON'T JOIN YOU IN PRETENDING THAT TRUTH DOES NOT EXIST OR MATTER!
WE HAVE TO STOP HIM! HE'LL INVOLVE US.... WHAT WILL OUR FRIENDS THINK? WE'RE GOING TO BE HATED AND SMEARED! ALEX, WHAT CAN WE DO?
GRAINE WON'T LISTEN TO REASON, HE HAS NO PITY! HE HAS TO BE MADE TO GIVE UP THIS SMEAR CAMPAIN!
I'LL GET HENRY RATH, GRAINE'S PUBLISHER, TO STOP HIM!
I'D FIRE THAT OGANT UNCOMPRO- NG GRAINE IF I D! HE WAS MY THER'S PET WHEN BROTHER WAS ISHER AND HIS DITION FOR ME NG OVER THE R AFTER HE O WAS THAT GRAINE FREE TO PRINT COLUMN HIS WAY! INTERFERE OR K GRAINE OUT, I'LL E THE PAPER! ●●★ BROTHER! I'LL DO WHATEVER AN TO FOUL UP AINE! YOU HAVE MY TH ON THAT!
DAILY CRUSADE
DAI CRUS
CAN DO EACH ER A LOT OF D, HENRY! I SOME VERY ORTANT FRIENDS LIKE YOU TO ET!
SORRY, GRAINE, THE WORD IS OUT, WE CAN'T HELP YOU!
"CAN'T"? YOU MEAN YOU WON'T STAND UP FOR WHAT IS RIGHT!
WE'RE NEUTRAL!
WHICH MEANS YOU REFUSE TO JUDGE BETWEEN A TRUTH AND A LIE!
TRUTH? LIE? WHO CAN EVER KNOW?
A WARNING, GRAINE, LAY OFF OR LEGAL ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU! THE INNOCENT WILL BE PROTECTED FROM UNPRINCIPLED PUBLICITY SEEKERS LIKE YOU!
IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN PROTECTING THE INNOCENT, FIRST MAKE SURE THEY ARE AND DON'T PROVIDE ANY HELP TO THE GUILTY!
3


THIS DEAL IS PROFITABLE FOR BOTH OF US, LEM! ....LEM,..REX GRAINE IS SNOOPING AROUND, HE THINKS YOU'RE TIED UP WITH RACKETEERS!
HA! HA! LET HIM SNOOP, ALEX, I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE!
I HAVE TO WARN THE MOB!
WE HAVE A SACRED DUTY NOT TO JUDGE OUR FELLOW MEN TOO UNKINDLY, TO ACCEPT THEM WITH ALL THEIR FAULTS BECAUSE WE ARE ALL IMPERFECT! WE ARE ONLY HUMAN!
MR. SWET UNDERSTANDS HUMAN NATURE! IT IS CRUEL TO BELIEVE THAT THE WAY ANYONE ACTS MAKES HIM BETTER OR WORSE THAN ANYONE ELSE! WE ARE ALL WITH SIN!
YES, WE'RE ONLY HUMAN SO I DON'T BELIEVE IN CONDEMNING MY FELLOW MEN. WE MUST SHOW THEM MERCY, OVERLOOK THEIR VICES AND NOT TO EXPECT TOO MUCH OF THEM! WE'RE ALL ALIKE, WHO'S TO JUDGE?
IT'S MEN LIKE YOU, MR. SWET, WHO OFFER HOPE AND INSPIRATION TO MANKIND BY REJECTING THE CRUEL VIEWS BASED ON ANY KIND OF "LOGICAL" PRINCIPLES OR STANDARDS!
ALEX, VOG'S SON IS GOING TO MARRY MY DAUGHTER AND VOG'S ON GRAINE'S LIST! GRAINE CAN RUIN OUR BUSINESS MERGER, ME AND THE MARRIAGE!... I'M DESPERATE!
EVEN GRAINE HAS HIS PRICE! THAT WAS HIS ANGLE ALL ALONG, HE HAD US FOOLED, THAT'S WHY HE'S NEVER PRINTED ANYTHING...HE'S WAITING FOR A PAY-OFF. THAT SNEAKY. CROOK!
ALRIGHT, GRAINE, WE'LL PAY! HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT TO BLEED US FOR?
SO I'M OFFERED A BRIBE FROM OUR "LEADING CITIZENS" TO PROTECT THE CORRUPT!
THE RESULTS OF YOUR UGLY KEYHOLE SNOOPING WILL HURT THE INNOCENT THE MOST!
WHY SHOULD ANYONE ASSUME GUILT OR PENALIZE HIMSELF FOR ANOTHER'S CRIME! VICE OR VIRTUE ISN'T INHERITED OR CAUGHT LIKE A COLD! MY ACTIONS DON'T MAKE ANYONE ELSE GOOD OR BAD!
NO, PERCY..!
YOU INHUMAN...I WON'T LET YOU RUIN MY DEALS, -DIRTY MY REPUTATION!
MEN HAVE TO BE JUDGED BY THEIR ACTIONS.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
A CASE OF ASSAULT AND I HAVE SOME "LEADING CITIZENS" AS WITNESSES!
GO ON, MR. SWET, TELL THE OFFICER EXACTLY WHAT WAS SAID AND DONE!
Part 2 Next Issue!
4

LETTERS

Supplement to
COMIC CRUSADER #6

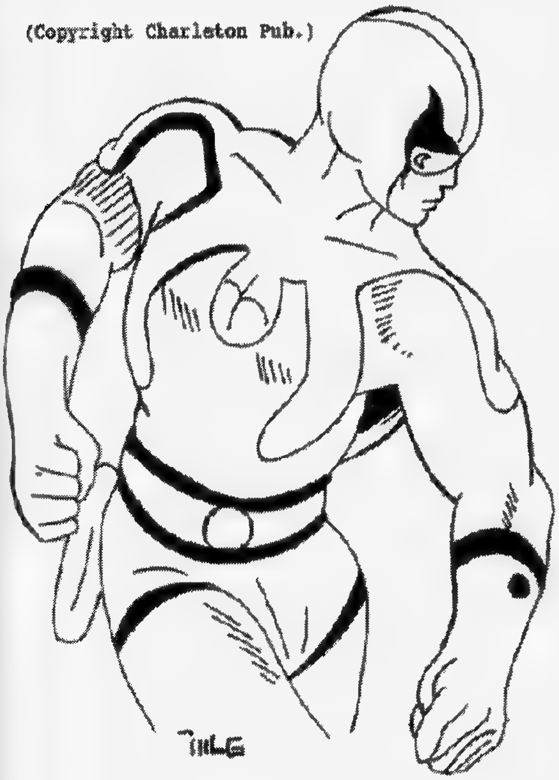
MIKE HOWELL- Well, Marty, you've done it. You've broken me down. I received CC #5 yesterday and was absolutely astounded! It was good. Darn good. If this keeps up you'll have to find another self-appointed Devil's advocate. On to the ish itself: The cover: what can I say? It was even better than the preview promised it would be.

I'm really pleased with the new policy of showing more artist's work. Even your own stuff, which, as you know, I was never enchanted with, seemed to take on a new quality, as exemplified by the Captain Marvel Jr. on page 3. I don't think that a year or 6 months ago you'd have thought of the rectangle in the background. Things like the shading on the faces on page 7 are also examples of the little things heretofore not done which are making you a more exciting artist.

You'll undoubtedly be deluged with praise for Tom Fagan, so I'll just say I agree completely. I'd rather heap praise on the Gardner Fox article, which along with the great coverage of this great writer, also managed to treat his works objectively, mentioning his good works along with his lesser ones. Encore on other such men not given a lot of fan coverage.

Bob Cosgrove's Fandom's Finest was again terrific. Bob is undoubtedly one of the more perceptive writers around. Too bad CC is a non-opinion zine. (At least until next year.)

Ahhh! The Defender! No, really. This isn't the old Defender; the one with undramatic panel structure, too much Zip-A-Tone, and slow plot. Nay, this is terrific! Now, this is really what I've been expecting. Great perspective, loaded with drama. The Zip was used with discretion, that is, for effect, not to color everything. Did you do the last panel? The hands especially, don't look like yours.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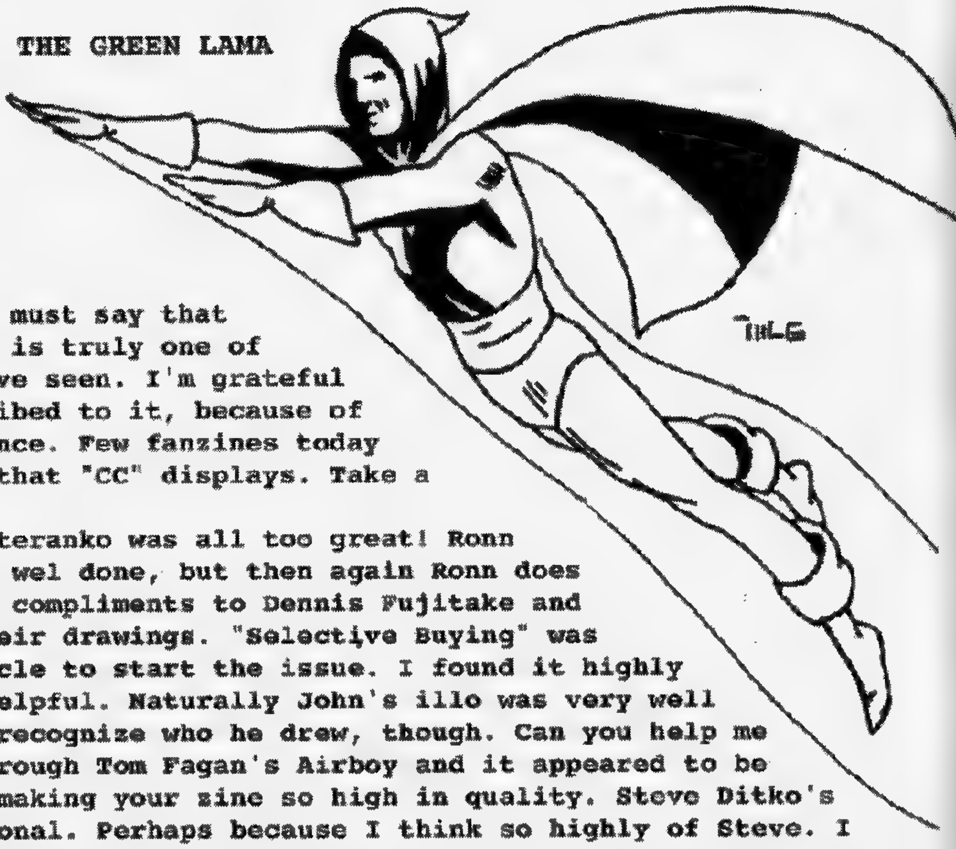
I don't think the Cyclops was as good as the other stuff in this ish, but was good nonetheless.

Lastly, the letters. I don't particularly like your LOC section anyway, but they're so unimportant it can't really be called a gripe.

Thinking back, I can't find anything to really criticize, a definite oddity! Congratulations on getting the Ditko strip. In closing I'd like to say that if you keep this up I'll have to take back every derogatory thing I ever said about you, which may take a while. Continued good luck!

GLAD YOU THINK MY ART IS IMPROVING. I DID LIKE THE WAY CAPT. MARVEL JR. TURNED OUT. I DID THE LAST PANEL IN THE DEFENDER...STEVE'S INKS MADE IT LOOK BETTER.

THE GREEN LAMA



MAX GOTTFRIED - I must say that Comic Crusader #5 is truly one of the best zines I've seen. I'm grateful for having subscribed to it, because of its sheer excellence. Few fanzines today have the quality that "CC" displays. Take a bow, Martin!

The cover by Steranko was all too great! Ronn Foss' "Excel" was wel done, but then again Ronn does terrific work. My compliments to Dennis Fujitake and Bill Wilson on their drawings. "Selective Buying" was an excellent article to start the issue. I found it highly interesting and helpful. Naturally John's illo was very well done. I couldn't recognize who he drew, though. Can you help me out? I glanced through Tom Fagan's Airboy and it appeared to be anoter factor in making your zine so high in quality. Steve Ditko's Mr. A was sensational. Perhaps because I think so highly of Steve. I can't see why so many fans lost faith in him when he began the Creeper and The Hawk And The Dove. They claim his work went bad, which is all too preposterous. "32 Years With Gardner Fox" was another great feature. Artwork was very good, and ditto for the article. Fantucchio's full page of Mr. Terrific and Wildcat was truly up to par, although I don't care for the squared-off fingers. Bob Cosgrove wrote an excellent review of SSC's Xalkor. Your strip, The Defender, really impressed me.The art, naturally, resembled Wally Wood's to a "T". "Comic Chatter", I hope, is a regular for CC. It was highly informative. Fritz's Batman was great! When you have a new artist, you don't kid around. I can't wait for issue #6, which I'm dying to see with a Ditko Mr. A strip. Oh yes, Fujitake's back cover was excellent.

THE CHARACTER JOHN DREW IS AN AMA-HERO OF HIS OWN. HE'S A CHARACTER THAT JOHN HAD A CONTEST ABOUT IN BILL WILSON'S "COLLECTOR". YOU WERE TO GIVE THE CHARACTER AN ORIGIN, POWERS, AND A NAME. I WAS ONE OF THE TWO WINNERS, BY THE WAY. (JOHN ASKS THAT NO INFO BE GIVEN ON THE CHARACTER YET.)

JOHN ROUSE - I just finished Comic Crusader #5 and had to write. It is without a doubt the finest fanzine I've read. The minute I saw Steranko's cover, I knew it had to be good. The artwork is the best I've seen anywhere, the best being the back cover and your Defender strip, which I feel should be lengthened. The Airboy article was good, but seemed a little long. The Gardner Fox story was the best article on a comic book writer or artist I've ever seen. Especially the little resume' on each of his books. I'm not sure what "Empress Of Mongo" was about, but I guess it was continued from last issue.

"EMPRESS OF MONGO" IS PART OF A REGULAR FLASH GORDON FEATURE TELLING OF HIS ADVENTURES.

JIM SMITH - I'm afraid this letter is going to be highly cliche' from start to finish. I'm just not inventive enough to coin new terms that would apply to a zine as good as CC #5. Tom Fagan's Airboy article is well on its way to becoming the most fascinating article article ever written in fandom. He spices up his articles with a writing flair that borders on the uncanny.

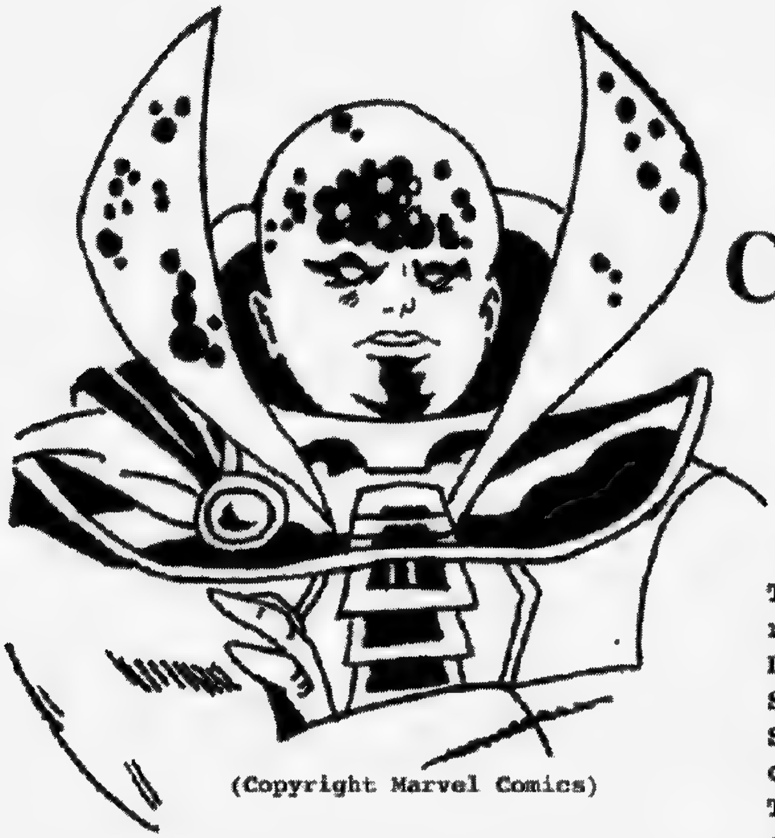
The Fox article while not containing much new info, was still a quantum leap ahead of the many filler articles prevalent in CC #4. I realize that Steranko, Ditko and Foss are highly popular artists, but I feel that Steve Fritz's illo of Sandman was the most engrossing art I've ever seen. He captured in that one drawing the entire mystique that kept the "mystery men" types on top For many years.

I AGREE. BOTH TOM AND STEVE ARE THE GREATEST. AS FOR FILLER ARTICLES...THESE ARTICLES ARE REGULAR FEATURES AND MEANT TO BE INFORMATIVE. MOST FANS PREFER THEM TO LONGER ARTICLES. I TRY TO KEEP "CRUSADER" WELL BALANCED.

ERIC KNIGHT - CC #5 was great. It was fantastically low priced with good quality. Steranko's cover was good. It looked like just pencils. The article on Fox was good, but not enough time was given to the Hawkman strip. Airboy was different, and I'm looking forward to Ditko's Mr. A. I think more time should be spent on the fantastic art of Neal Adams and how DC (in my opinion) greatly abused his talents.

One point of interest. As stated before, The Defender could be drawn by Wally Wood and I wouldn't know the difference. Then, on pg. 11 you come up with a fantastic version of Flash Gordon, etc. The rest of your artwork reminds me of the 1950 Superboy art. Fantucchio's art was great, but he's got to be kidding with longhorn Wildcat. Steve Fritz's Batman ala Neal Adams is what I've wanted the Man of the Bat to be for years. On the whole you had a good, well rounded issue.

I think it's time for me to make a statement about my art. Many fans have raved about it, others would like to burn me at the stake because I do something short of sacrilege: I sometimes SWIPE!!! I copy art (at times) for Crusader for a number of reasons. Foremost is to give my readers an accurate drawing of the character talked about in an article. I leave stylized art to people like John Fantucchio and Ronn Foss. Secondly, I am not a pro. This is something many fans fail to realize about a fan artist. I do know how to draw, but I am not experienced enough to be a pro. My style is like Wally Wood's and I try to cultivate it. When I do a Flash Gordon I *sometimes* copy right from an Alex Raymond drawing, however I am doing the art. Although I can never come close to the master - Al Williamson. Not all my art is "swipes" though. When I have time and am really wound up in what I'm drawing I do turn out quite a bit of good *original* material. So you can belong to two schools of thought - the "I hate Martin Greim", or the "I enjoy a well-drawn picture" thought. Either way, I AM WHAT I AM, AND NO MORE. -MLG



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I'M WATCHING FOR

COMIC CRUSADER

7

Out late in September. This issue will feature a report on two cons. The Detroit Con, covered by Steve Fritz, and the Phil Seuling Con in New York covered by Bob Cosgrove, Tom Fagan, Al Bradford, and Martin L. Greim. If you missed last year's much acclaimed con issue...DON'T MISS THIS ONE! Also in this issue will be part 2 of Steve Ditko's *Mr. A* story. For art in this issue - some of fandom's finest. If you don't order anoter fanzine this year, **ORDER THIS ONE**!

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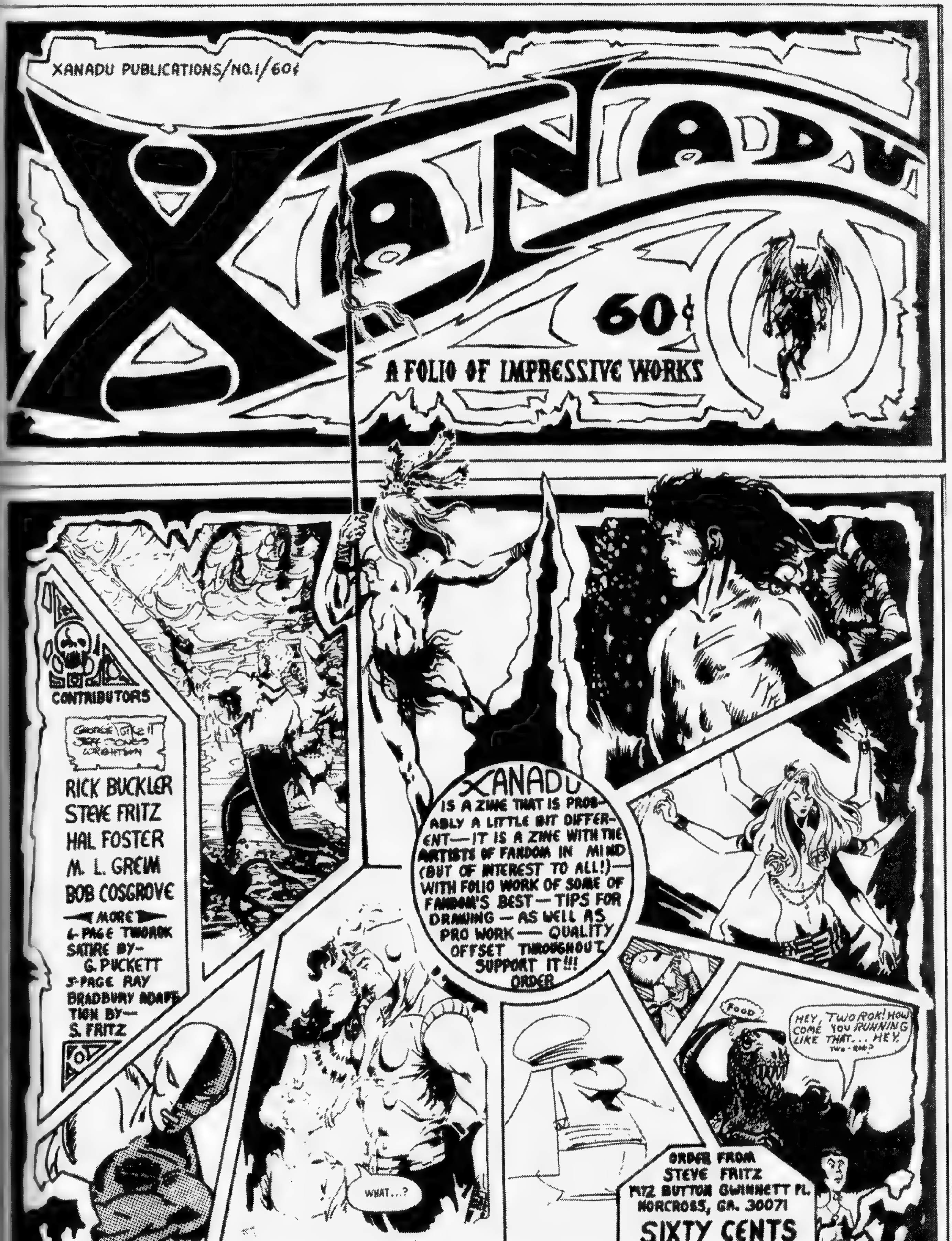

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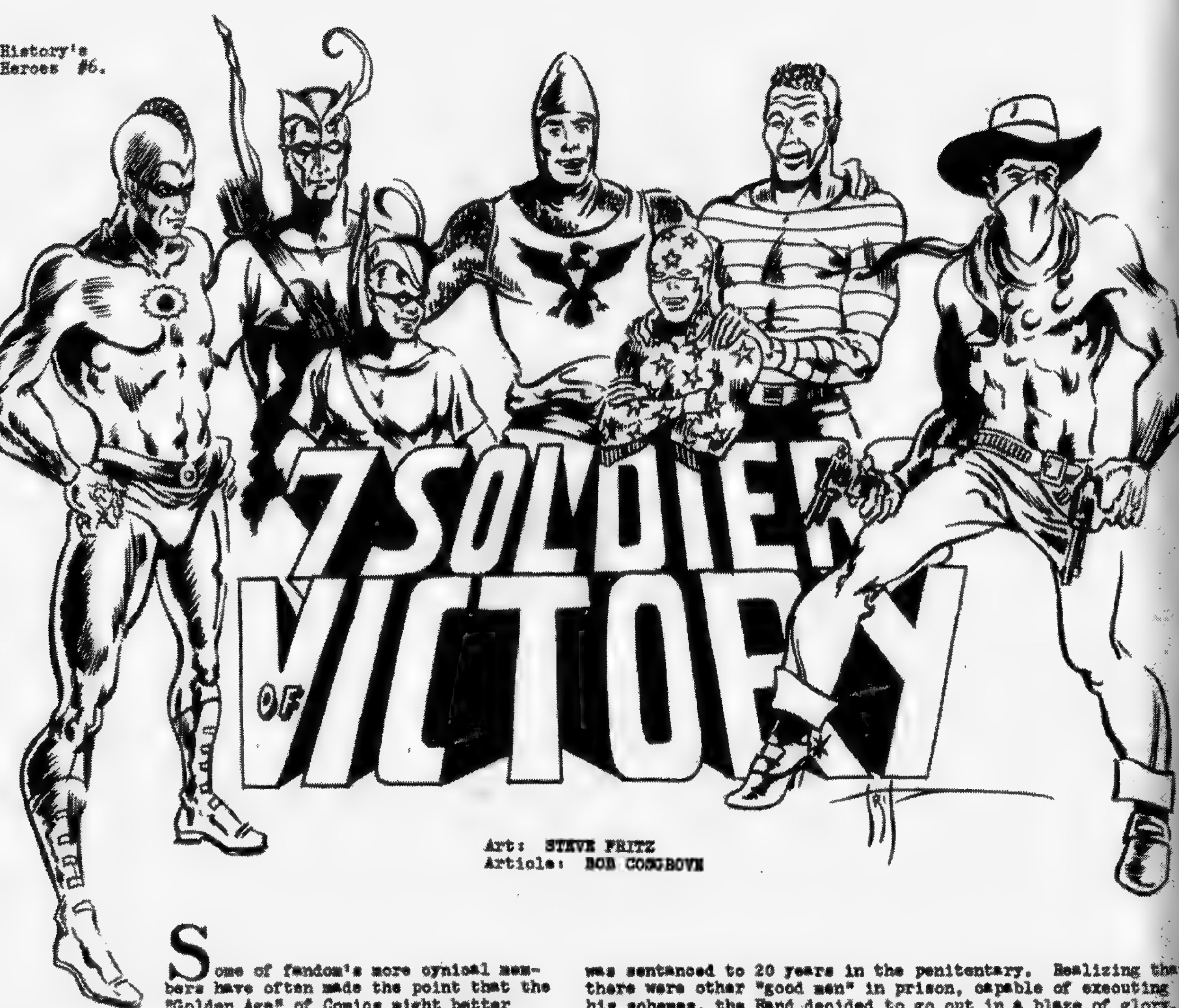


Art: STEVE FRITZ
Article: BOB COSGROVE

Some of fandom's more cynical members have often made the point that the "Golden Age" of Comics might better be referred to as the "Golden Age of Swiping." Not swiping in the sense of art, although there was plenty of that too, but swiping in the sense of ideas. DC had the Flash, so Quality had Quicksilver, and Timely had the Whizzer, and so on down the line. Even within the same company there was swiping. Batman had his Batcave, so Superman suddenly needed a Fortress of Solitude, Green Arrow needed an Arrow Cave, and even the Martian Manhunter had to have a secret cave hideaway, guarded by "Zook," his faithful companion.

Fandom's favorite group of heroes, the legendary "Justice Society of America," was hardly an exception to this rule of thumb. Timely came out with the All-Winners Squad, who were better done than most of the JSA stories, and National Periodical Publications quickly copied their own success with the Law's Legionaires, or, as they were more often called, THE SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY. This article relates their origin.

According to the magazine, the characters who made up the Legion were favorites from various comics in the DC line. They were the Crimson Avenger, from Detective comics, Green Arrow and Speedy from More Fun, the Shining Knight from Adventure, Vigilante from Action, and the Star Spangled Kid and Stripesy, from Star Spangled Comics. In actuality, none of these features were ever hits, or especially well done, except for Frazetta's later work on the Shining Knight, and Vigilante, who was almost always well-drawn by Mort Meskin, one of the most gifted story tellers in comic books.

The origin story, in Leading Comics #1, 1941, told how a master criminal received a death sentance. This, however, was not a legal sentance, but a sentance from God. A doctor informed the Hand that he was dying of an incurable malady. The Hand had been, in his own words, "A Napoleon of Crime, whose master-strokes had stunned the world with crimes the police were never able to solve".

Stunned by this bitter news of dying life, the Hand lamented that his "greatest coups were still ahead of me! Foolproof schemes, planned here in detail! Now, they will never be carried out!"

Those words might have marked the end of the arch-villains reign of plunder, had a newspaper headline not caught his eye. The headline told how criminal "Big Caesar" was sentanced to 20 years in the penitentary. Realizing that there were other "good men" in prison, capable of executing his schemes, the Hand decided to go out in a blaze of glory. Reaching for his phone, the Hand set in motion wheels that would "crowd Captain Kidd and Jesse James right out of the history books."

Newspaper headlines screamed the news: "RED DRAGON BLASTS WAY TO FREEDOM!" "AUTOGIRO FREES PROF. MERLIN", "BIG CAESAR CRUSHES (The letterer most likely should have written 'crashes'!) OUT!" "NEEDLE PIERCES PRISON WALL!" And, simultaneously, gunmen ambush a police squad on its way to raid the hideout of the DUMMY, infamous kidnaper.

"By devious ways the five fugitive criminals arrive at the mysterious hilltop house, where the HAND awaits them." Explaining that all of them owed their liberty to him, the Hand proposed that each of these men act as one of his fingers, executing his perfectly planned crimes. However, he warned them that in carrying the crimes out, each would be opposed by such worthy opponents as Green Arrow and The Crimson Avenger. The criminals proved agreeable, and the Hand gave them their instructions for each crime.

The next day, a full page ad appeared in newspapers in all sections of the country, challenging Green Arrow, the Shining Knight, the Crimson Avenger, The Vigilante, and The Star Spangled Kid to participate in the "greatest criminal chase in history." In answer, each of the challenged crime fighters gathered Tuesday at 10 PM in Gotham City Auditorium, where the Hand had arranged to contact them.

Promptly at ten, the lights dim and the grinning face of the Hand appears on a convenient screen, and informs his foes of the whereabouts of his various leiutenants. As they disband to meet the challenge, Green Arrow suggests to his fellow crime fighters that the seven meet again in Gotham Auditorium a week from that Tuesday, to report to one another and to "consider furthur the problem of the HAND himself!"

It is the GREEN ARROW, and his "dynamic protege SPEEDY," who first encounter the sinister Hand's mechinations of evil, as they head toward Death Valley in their ARROWCAR, which was inexplicably refered to as "The Arrowplane." Although they hope to take Professor Merlin by surprise, Green Arrow has a hunch that The Hand has told Merlin to expect them--a hunch that proves totally correct.

The battle is soon to begin, for high above the flashing

Arrowcar, is the Sinister Aircraft of Prof. Merlin. As Merlin yanks a lever, a bomb hurtles downward, but is detonated before contact by the lightning swift shaft of the Green Arrow. It is interesting to note that in these early adventures, GA had none of the ridiculous shafts that later marred his career, but only the plain, ordinary arrows, which proved remarkably effective in accomplishing what he set out to do.

After escaping from another of Merlin's traps, the Emerald Archer and his scarlet assistant follow Merlin to a mine shaft, which Merlin has learned of by torturing an eccentric desert hermit.

However, when the archers close in on their prey, the greedy Merlin seeks to dynamite the shaft, sealing it off for his return. Instead, the rotten timbers of the mine collapse, sealing the evil professor's doom.

Next to meet danger, this time at the hands of the Nefarious Needle, is the Star Spangled Kid and Stripesy. Like the rest of the 7 Soldiers, the Kid and Stripesy had no super powers, only gadgets, like their "steelite" coils, and their unbelievable car, a Rolls Royce that could become a racing car, a helecopter, and a rocketship. The team of SSK & S was a twist on the usual "kid-sidekick gimmick", which had the Star Spangled Kid as the brains of the team, and the adult Stripesy as the lackey.

The task of the duo was to prevent the Needle from stealing a ray gun from Brighten Laboratories, and although they failed in this, they soon caught up with the Needle, who was completing his major crime, the destruction of the Panama Canal. Before the ray-gun could destroy its target, the STAR-ROCKET RACER, the aforementioned car-of-all trades, blocks the rays, causing them to ricochet, destroying the supports beneath the "tall tower of treachery," who tumbled from his perch into the waiting steelite lariot of the Star Spangled Kid.

Now, it was the Crimson Avenger's turn to foil the schemes of mob-leader Big Caesar. The Crimson Avenger, always drawn two heads tall, in the wayout but good style of Jack Lehti, had recently been converted from a man of mystery, Green Hornet type, to a costumed adventurer of the Batman style. In the change-over, he was gifted with an oriental sidekick named Wing, who although treated with equality, was drawn in cartoon oriental style. Perhaps it was a measure of prejudice that unlike Speedy and Stripesy, Wing never appeared in the opening or closing chapter, and was never a soldier. On the other hand, maybe it was because he didn't like the sound of "The Eight Soldiers of Victory."

At any rate, these two, in a well drawn story, prevented Big Caesar from blacking out, then raiding, Broadway, and successfully sent his mob to prison.

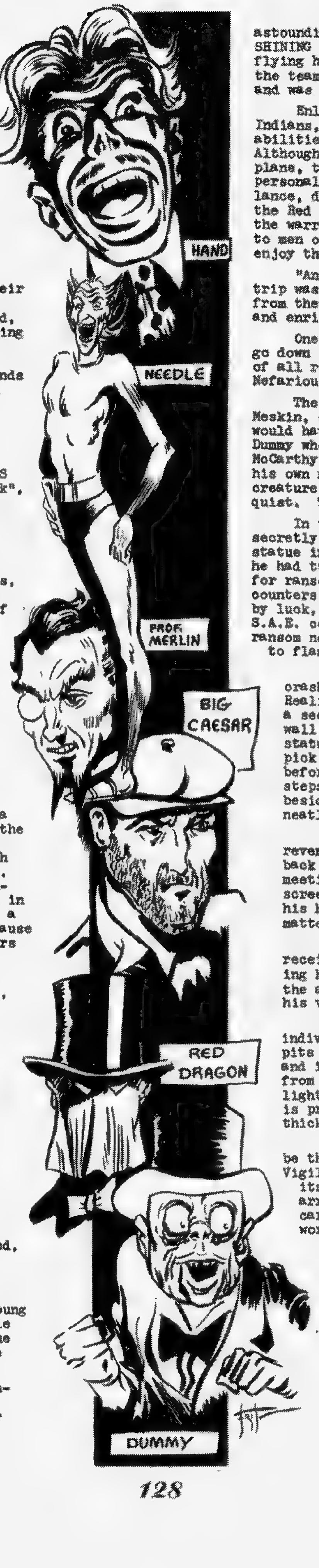
Over the little known Forest Valley of the Wamona came the Red Dragon, "horrible henchman of the Hand," swooping low over his objective.

Upon landing, the Red Dragon guns down the cheif of the Wamona Indians, who greets him in peace. Before, however, the tribe can attack, the elderly medicine man reminds them of the prophecy of the Wendigo. The prophecy fortells that a mighty stranger would descend on wings from heaven---overthrow the ruler of the valley--and make the Wamona great and rich.

Ruthlessly capitalizing on the old legend, the Red Dragon institutes a reign of ruthless terror, forcing the Indian Braves to mine a local deposit of valuable radium ore.

"Only one man dares resist--the brave young warrior Komah, who has fled from his miserable tribe..." As he wanders through the woods, he sights another "wendigo," descending from the sky on a fabulous flying horse.

Although he resolves to kill this new intruder, Komah soon discovers that arrows and tomahawks are useless against the magic armor and sword of sharpness possessed by the astounding Sir Justin, better known as--THE SHINING KNIGHT. With his magical weapons and flying horse, the Knight was the only member of the team who could approximate super-abilities, and was thus the most powerful.



Enlisting the aid of Komah and other Indians, the Knight uses all of his special abilities to end the white mans' reign of terror. Although the Red Dragon tries to escape in a plane, the Shining Knight mounts Victory, his personal pegasus, and strikes the plane with his lance, disabling it, and enabling him to capture the Red Dragon. Upon landing, the Knight advises the warriors to sell the riches dug from the earth to men of the outer world, so that the tribe may enjoy the profit.

"And so, the strange, old prophecy of the trip was fulfilled---a mighty visitor flew down from the sky, overthrew the master of the valley, and enriched the people who lived there. . ."

One by one, the Hand has seen his best agents go down in defeat--but the most sinister agent of all remains to oppose the Vigilante--the Nefarious DUMMY!

The Dummy, superbly illustrated by Mort Meskin, or "Mort Morton Jr.," as the credits would have it, seemed just that, a sinister Dummy who looked just like an evil Charlie McCarthy. In fact, thruout most of the story, his own mob was convinced that he was a wooden creature, and that one of the mob was a ventriloquist. They were wrong.

In this episode, the Dummy's racket was to secretly kidnap important people, leaving a statue in their place. Then, by pretending that he had turned them to stone, he issued orders for ransom. Purely by luck, the Vigilante encounters Dummy's agents at a movie set, and again by luck, discovers that the fake address on the S.A.E. conveniantly included with the Dummy's ransom note, becomes a real address when exposed to flame.

Armed with this knowledge, Vigilante crashes the manikin of murder's hideout. Realizing that all is lost, the Dummy presses a secret button, sliding a section of the wall up, revealing a room full of stone statues. Hiding in the room, he attempts to pick the Vigilante off, but a split second before the gun cracks out, the Range-fighter steps sidewards, sending the line of statues beside him crashing to the ground, and neatly pinning the Dummy.

Enraged beyond belief, the Hand vows revenge. When the Law Legionares report back to Gotham Theater, he moniters their meeting, then once again appears on the screen, this time revealing the location of his hideout. The Hand had decided to take matters into his own hand, so to speak.

Before the 7 arrive however, the Hand receives a phone call from his doctor, telling him of a new cure for his malady. Now, the arch-villain must fight not only for his vanity, but for his life as well.

One by one the soldiers overcome individual traps--clutching iron hands, pits of spikes, wolves, electric traps, and iron barriers, only to face death from a machine designed to produce lightning bolts, while the Hand himself is protected by plexi-glass 12 feet thick.

However, before the fatal switch can be thrown, the blazing six-guns of the Vigilante sever the lightning gun from its supporting cables, swiveling it arround at the Hand. "Thus Ends the career of a Master of Evil such as the world has seldom seen--and let us hope seldom will see."

At this point, a wiser reader might have observed that "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will--"

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COMIC CHATTER

This issue of Comic Chatter starts off on a sad note. George Klein, a fine inker at Marvel, has passed away. A great loss to the comic media. He Will Be Missed!

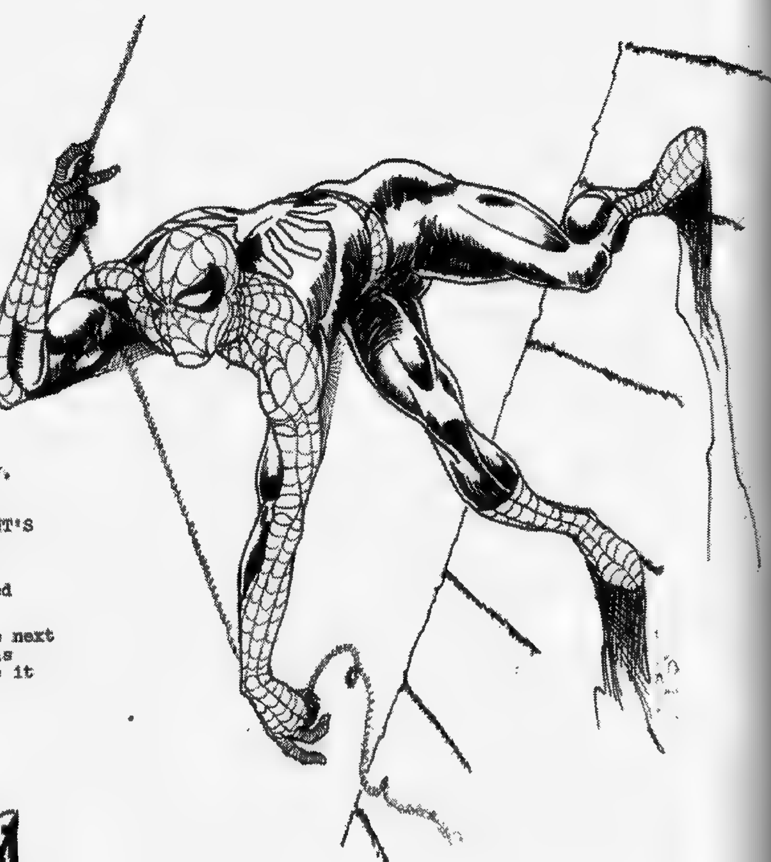
Now for things a little on the brighter side.

Perhaps, by this time, many of you have heard that Jim Steranko had left Marvel. As of this writing, the problem Jim had with Marvel has been straightened out and he's back at work. Jim has also sold some paintings to various paperback companies, such as LANCER - Keep an eye out for them.

I know all you fans will be excited to learn, that sometime in Aug. or Sept., you'll be able to buy, for a mere $1.00 each, four 25" X 36" posters by Jim Steranko. These posters will be in color and will feature SPIDERMAN, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THE HULK and AGENT'S of S.H.I.E.L.D. They will be available either from Marvel or be sold in 5 & 10¢ stores. Watch for 'em.

You might also like to know, that Jim was offered the Batman newspaper strip, but turned it down.

ABOUT TALON - All you Jim Steranko fans, be here next issue. Jim is soon to release some big news about his sword and sorcery creation, Talon. And we'll feature it here. Don't miss it!



Frit
to wood

As you're reading Part 1 of Mr. A this issue, notice the name of the newspaper Greine works for - "The Daily Crusader". I wonder if Steve's trying to tell me something?

OMISSINS and CORRECTIONS: About last issues Gardner Fox article - I've found Mr. Fox also wrote some Moon Girl stories in the late '40's as well as Manhattan's Files, Igor the Archer, Juan Meatbal and The Chessmen for International Comics. The first novel he wrote was not his first published story. The Borgia Blade, was published by Gold Medal in 1953, while his first comic story was Steve Malone. Before Mr. Fox wrote his first novel, he also wrote short stories for Weird Tales, Planet Stories, Fantasy Adventure, Ace Sports, Varsity, Baseball Stories, Ten Story Western, and the Boston Globe - plus a lot of other pulp magazines. I'd like to thank Mr. Fox for giving me this information, to keep the record straight.

Look for a feature article on Dan Adkins in a future issue of The Comic Crusader - With some art by him.

Also coming up is a great article on The Heap, by Tom Fagan.

Next issue many of our regular features will be dropped for this issue only. Once again, The Comic Crusader will bring you its Comic Con Issue. We'll try to give you an accurate, in-depth report on the goings on at the New York con. If you read last year's report, I know you won't want to miss this one. For an overall report and behind the scenes coverage - Don't Miss Issue #7 of THE COMIC CRUSADER - On Sale, Late In September.

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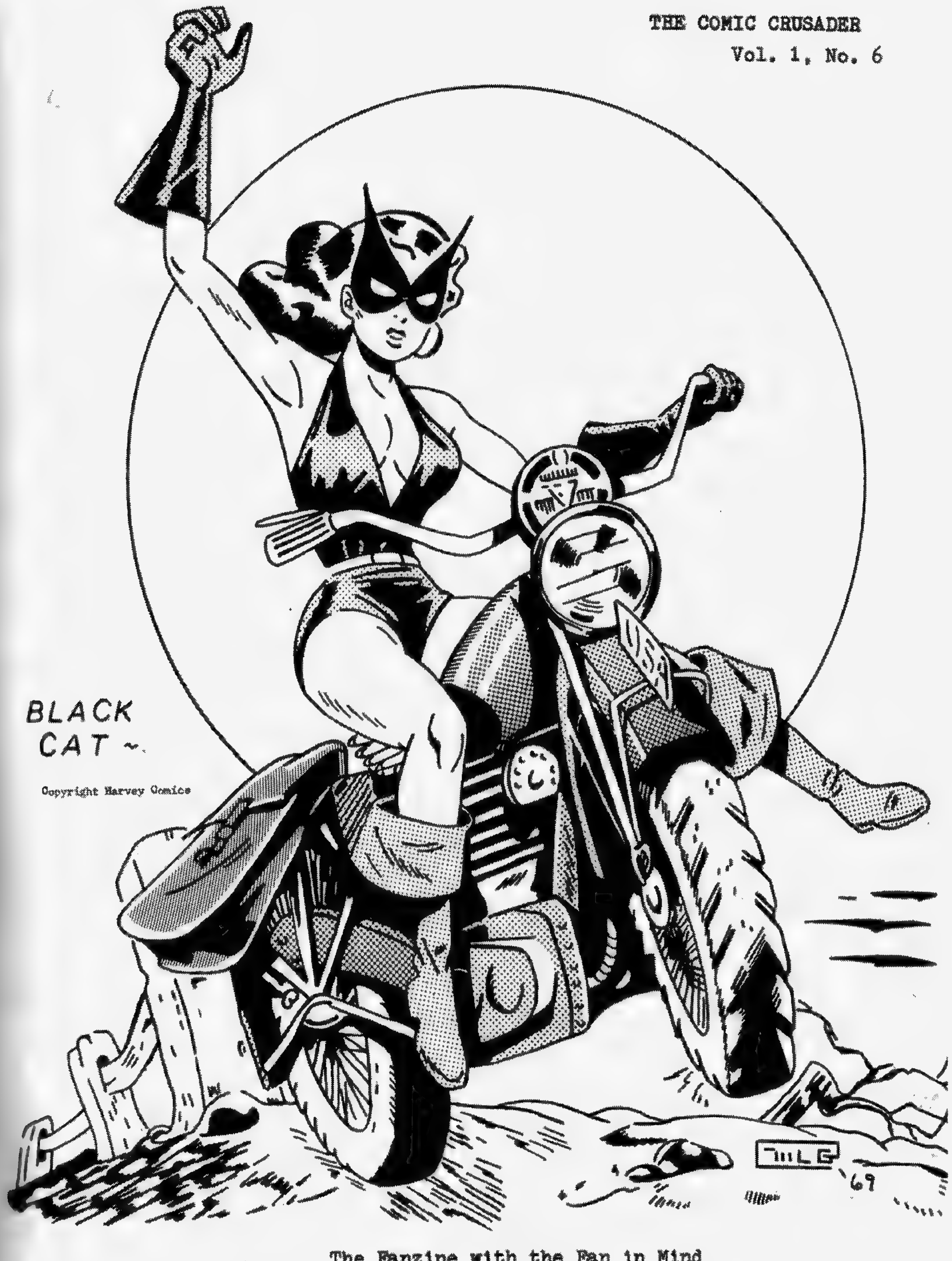
THE COMIC CRUSADER
Vol. 1, No. 6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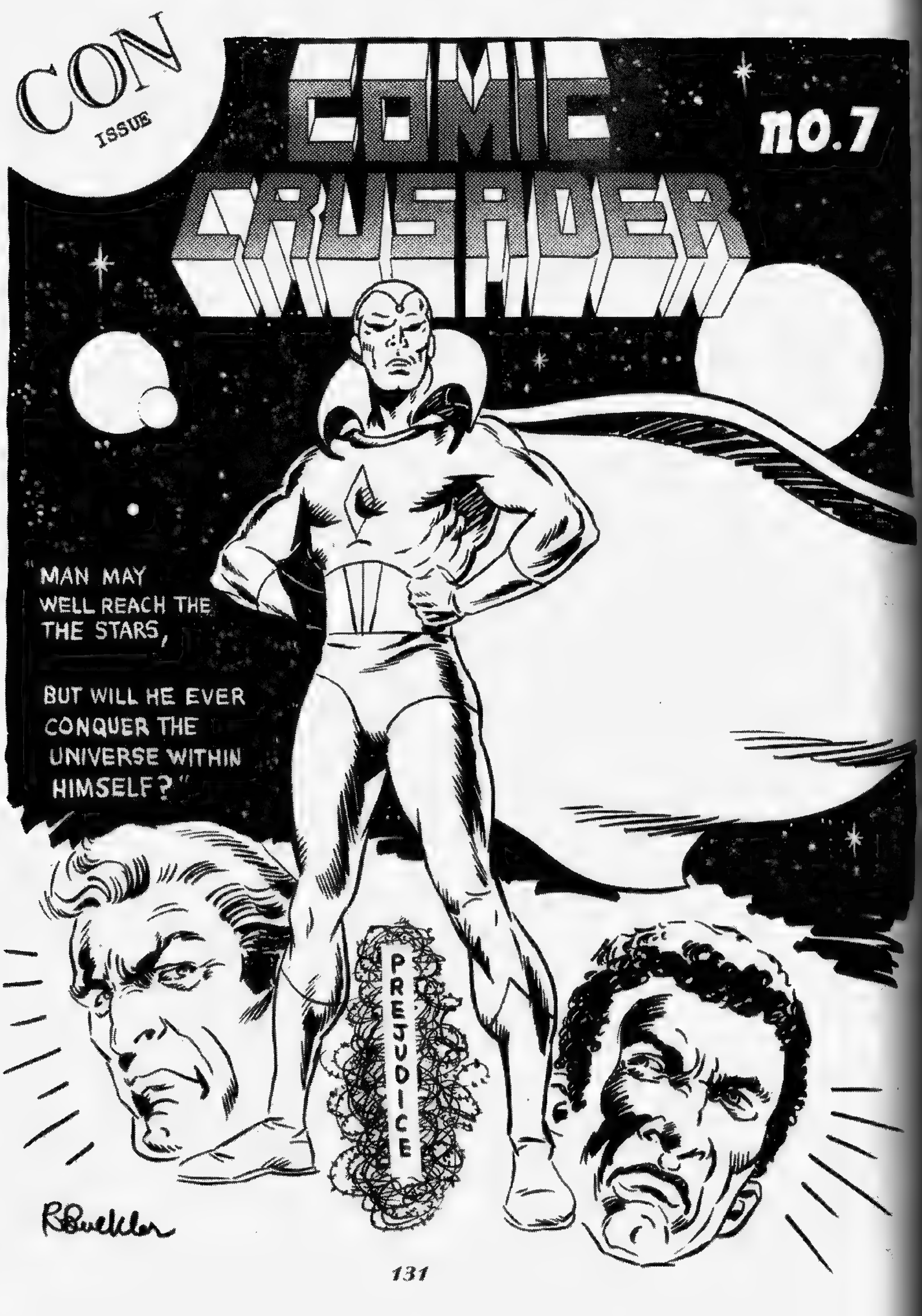
The Fanzine with the Fan in Mind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ISSUE
COMIC CRUSADER
no.7
"MAN MAY WELL REACH THE THE STARS,
BUT WILL HE EVER CONQUER THE UNIVERSE WITHIN HIMSELF?"
PREJUDICE
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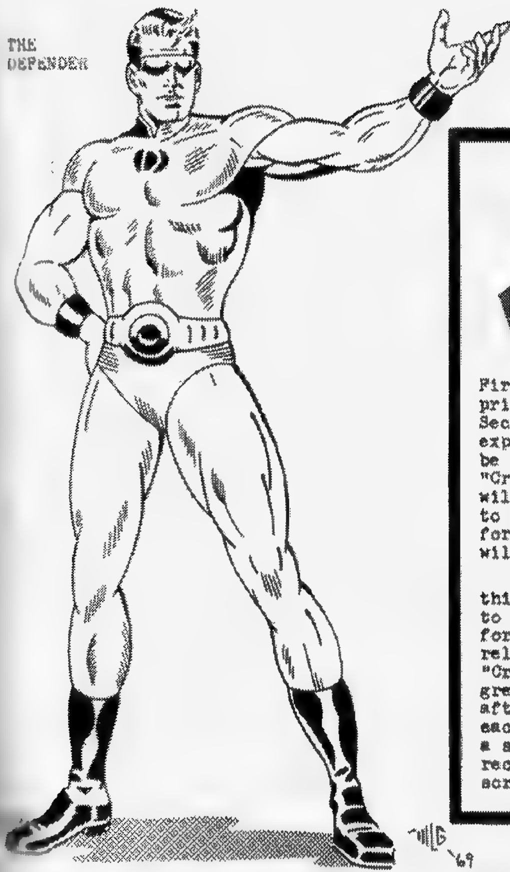
THE DEFENDER



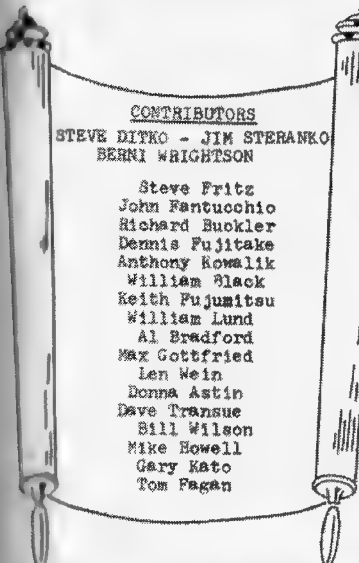
Let's go to the Con

Greetings fans! Welcome to "Comic Crusader's" Convention Issue. In this issue, you'll get first hand reports on not one, but two of the comic conventions held this past summer. In these pages, you'll see photos of Pros and fans alike, complimented by some of the best art ever presented in a fanzine. Hope you enjoy it!

I'd like, at this time, to thank all the people who made this issue possible. Not only the ones listed in the contributors listing, but the many pros and fans I met at the convention this year. It's because of them, I'm glad I read and collect comics.

With this issue, you'll begin to notice a change in "Crusader". First, it's now completely offset. This is due to the fact, that my print run is such, that I can no longer maintain a ditto supplement. Secondly, this issue is longer. More pages had to be added (at my expense) due to the amount of material to be presented. Next issue will be 24 pages in length. (Still larger than before.) Another change in "Crusader", will be the longer Defender strip. Starting next issue, it will run 4 or 5 pages, but will not appear in every issue. I'm trying to get another strip to alternate with The Defender, giving me more time for art. There will also be changes in many regular features. Some will alternate issues and become longer.

IMPORTANT! Some of you may have noticed something special about this issue.....IT'S LATE! The reason for this being, the time it took to collect and process the top grade material put in this issue. It is for this reason, I'm no longer setting an exact date for future issue's releases. I want to get the top material, you've come to expect in "Crusader", and still not be rushed in putting it out. I've got some great things planned, so stay with me. The next issue will be out, soon after the first of the year. (*See ad in ad & letter page.) Please order each new issue, for 35¢, after you recieve a present one. You may have a short wait, but I promise you it will be worth it! Subscribers will recieve notice when their subscriptions run out. Please! No more subscriptions. The bookkeeping is killing me. THE BEST... WLG



CONTRIBUTORS

STEVE DITKO - JIM STERANKO
BERNI WRIGHTSON

Steve Fritz
John Fantucchio
Richard Buckler
Dennis Fujitake
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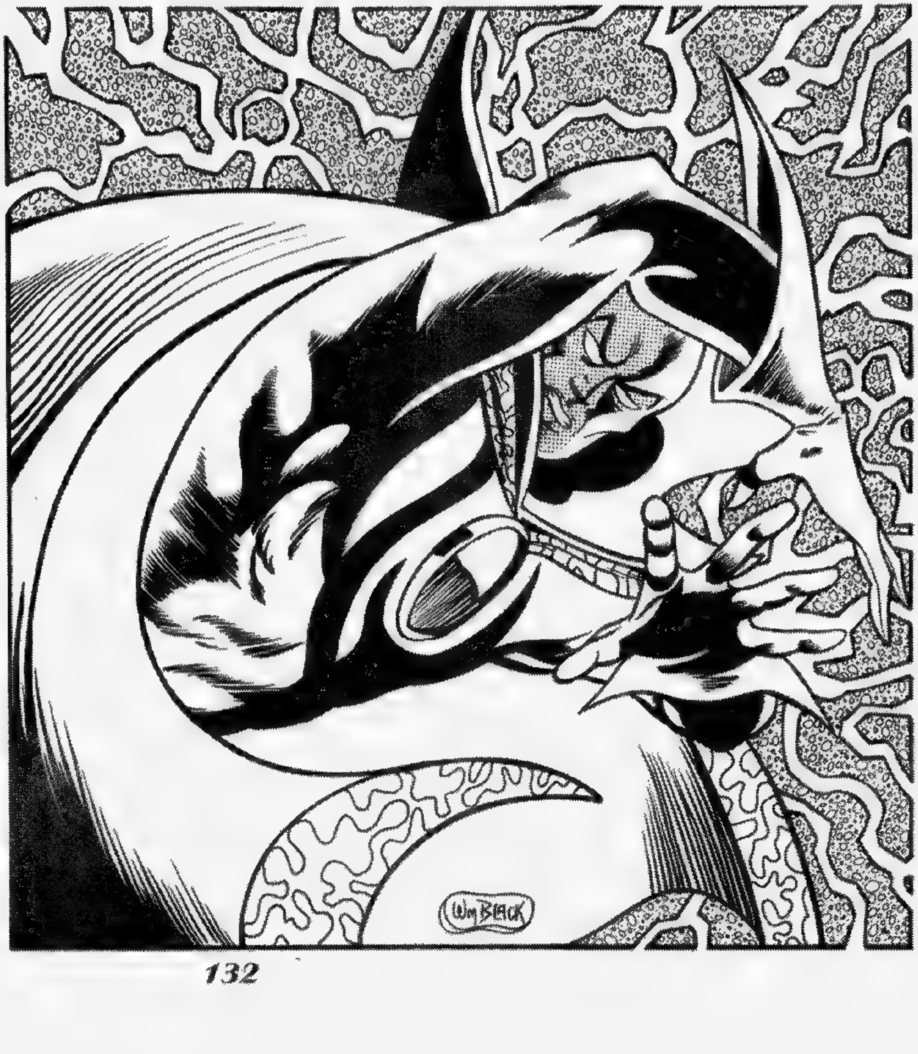
Gary Kato
Tom Fagan

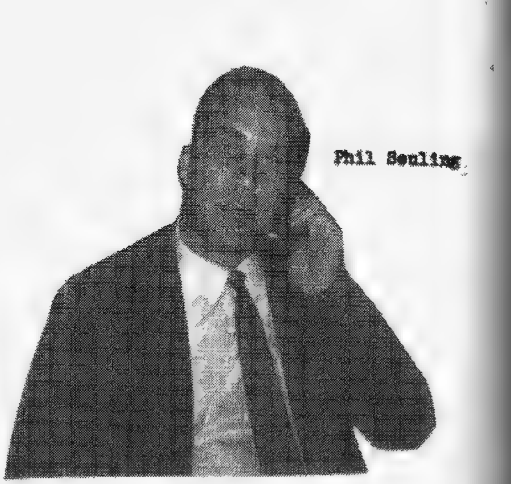
Bob Cosgrove - Ellie Greim -

Al Bradford



CON-69
NEW YORK

REPORTERS
Al Bradford - Tom Fagan - MLG
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Albert John Marro
and Anchor Man
BOB COSGROVE



Phil Seuling

Introduction

by Martin L. Greim

Thursday - July 3, 1969.
My wife, Ellie and I boarded the 10 o'clock train for New York. It was that time of the year again - a time when collectors and comic book readers, from all over the country, get together. It was COMIC CON time! In New York, Phil Seuling was putting on The 1969 Comic Art Convention; and once again, we were going.

It takes about 4½ hours to get to New York, by train. This may seem long, but if you had my sense of direction, you'ld understand why I take the train - I GET LOST GOING AROUND A ROTARY!

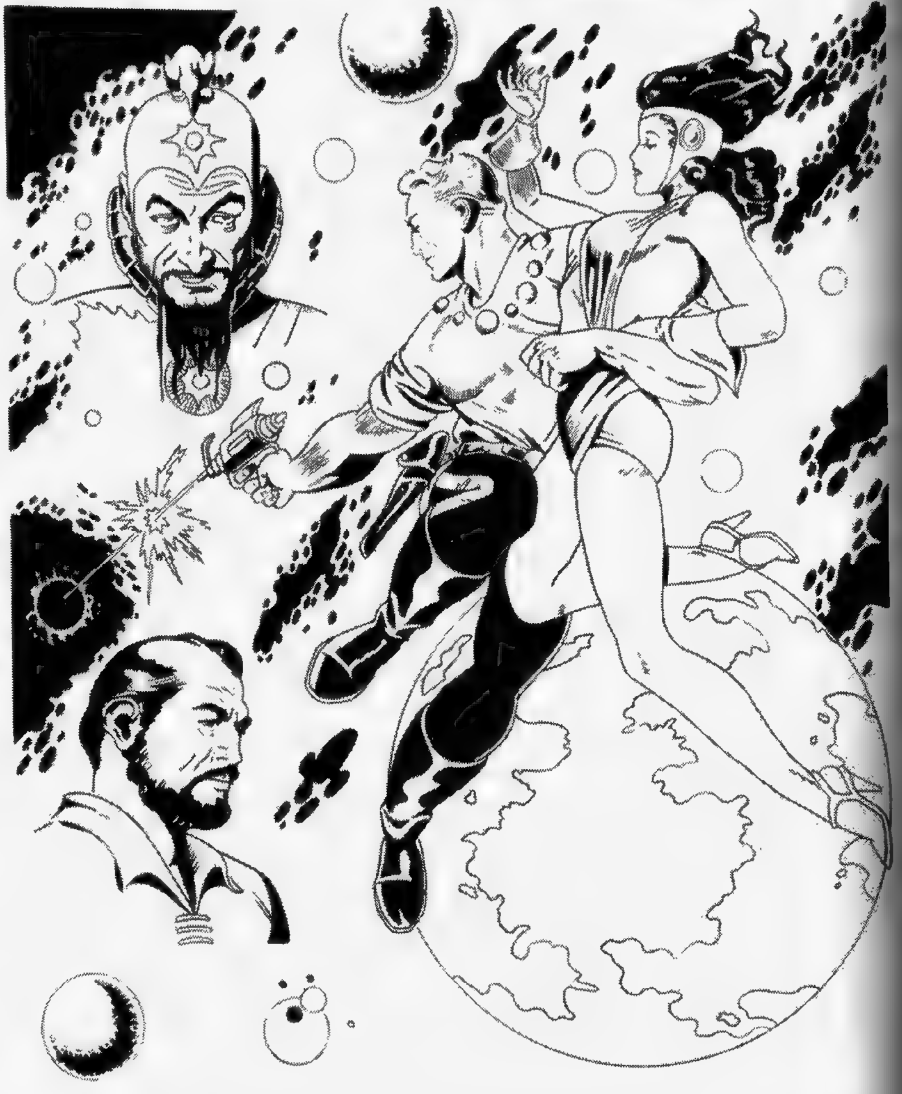
As the train rumbled along, what is usually a fun time for me was overcast by silence. Ellie often spoke to me, but I sat there pensively and spoke little. The reason for this was, I was making the trip without my good friend Bob Cosgrove. Bob, at the last minute, had to go into the hospital for an operation on his throat and would not be able to make the con.

As the trip wore on, Ellie tried to cheer me up by reminding me that I'd soon be seeing three other good friends, and staff members, Tom Fagan, Al Bradford, and A.J. Marro. Bless these three and Ellie, for without their help, this issue would never have seen print. I was never at my best, during the con; due to my concern for Bob and they really gave their all, to help me get this report.

Determined to make Bob's excellent reporting and interpretation an asset to this issue, and also to let him enjoy a little of the con he missed, I brought with me my handy-dandy tape recorder. As usual, Bob was able to do a tremendous job for me, from the tapes I brought back.

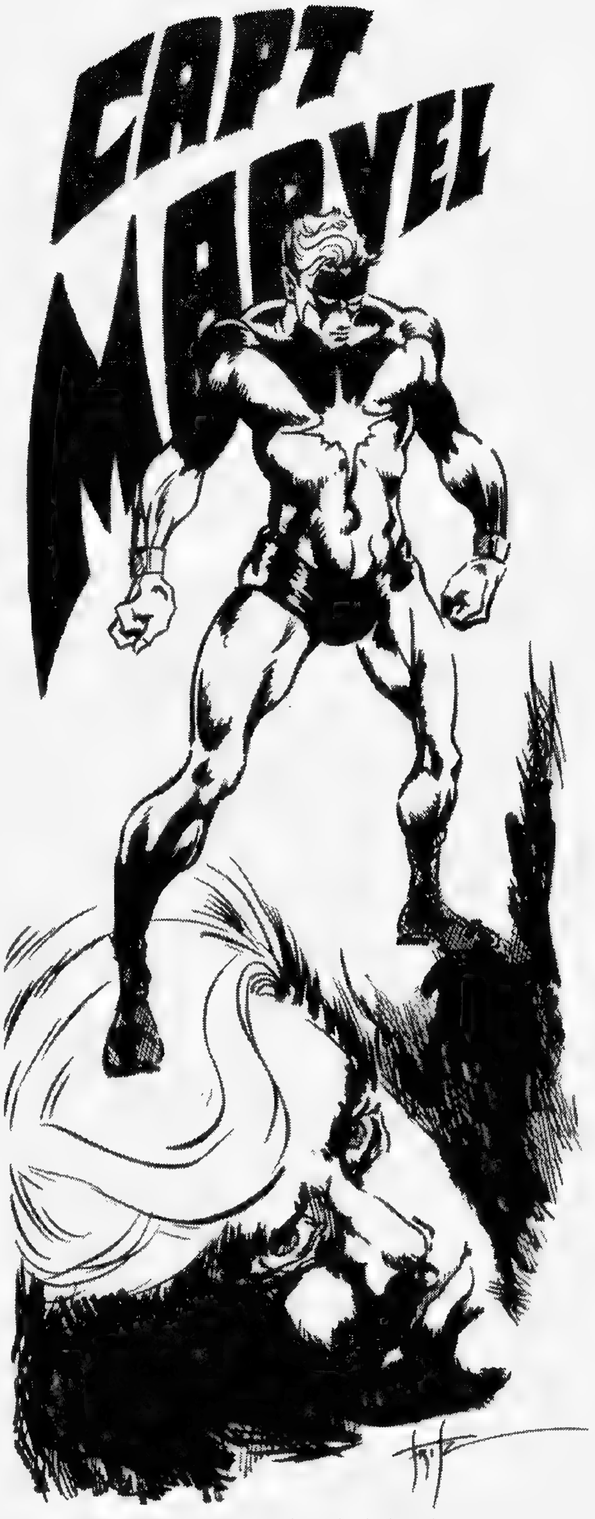
Ellie and I reached the hotel and proceeded to check in. I was prepared for the worst, for I remembered last years room. However, I did a double-take. The bellhop showed us to a corner room, with a beautiful interior. I almost asked the bellhop if we had the right room.

After supper, Ellie and I got together with John Fantucchio and his wife Mary. Together, we went upstairs, to the Sky-Top room, to find Phil Seuling. Both John and I had done some art for the con and we wanted to see Phil about its display. When we walked in, Phil came over and shook John's hand. I started to say, "er - my name is Martin Greim", (I'm not as well known as John and I thought I'd introduce myself.) but Phil never gave me a chance - He stuck his big, friendly hand out and greeted me with, "I know - you're Martin Greim." I felt great! For me, the con was officially open. John had on display many great pieces of art, both black and white and in color. It was some of the greatest art I've ever seen. As for myself, I'd done my first work in color - a Flash Gordon painting. For the many fans who asked me to print it, I've done so, in black and white, on this page. Phil then called Al Williamson over to look at my painting and I flipped when he said he liked it. I couldn't recieve better praise, than from the master.



At this point, I renewed a friendship with a guy I think a great deal of - Rich Buckler. After talking a while, we decided to get together and see the movie "Mackenna's Gold". After calling to see how Bob was, Rich led us to the SUBWAY! This proved to be my undoing. In Boston, when you ride the subway, you get a few seconds after a bell rings to sit down. Not so in N.Y.!! I entered the car and made no rush to sit down. Bad move Greim! A bell rang and the car took off like a shot, sending me sprawling against the wall. Rich then turned to me and said, "Didn't I tell you about that, Marty?" Aside from this, the rest of the evening was wonderful.

GIL
KANE



KEYNOTE SPEECH

(Sub Title)

CHILDHOOD'S END....REVISITED?

Reporter...TOM FAGAN

One often thinks of Green Lantern sending forth an emerald ray into stygian darkness to search out the truth in a never-ending quest for betterment. A similar comparison might be drawn for G.L.'s artist, Gil Kane.

Kane delivered the keynote address Friday, July 4th officially opening the 1969 Comic Art Convention, in New York City. Fans rapidly came to sharp attention as with soft-spoken and well-chosen words, then focused a blinding light stabbing into the shadows of Comic Book past, present and future.

The word picture, Kane painted his listeners, wasn't pleasant. Thought provoking matters seldom are. Messages, likewise, almost never are, and Gil Kane had a message. It went like this:

"We may be seeing not only the close of the golden age, but we may be standing on the edge of the final chapter of the ten-cent, twelve-cent and 15-cent comic book as we know them; in fact, we may already be over the brink without really knowing it!"

"We have reached the end of our 'Second Golden Age! Within the next two years, comics will change; I think it's going to be like the bombing of Britain--comics will go underground!"

This is the future, Kane outlined, unless the comic book industry does not take it on itself to strike out in new directions. If the industry fails, the comic reader will soon find himself spoon-fed the pap of funny animal stories, love romances and teenage humor. Gone will be the world of adventure and the superhero.

Why?

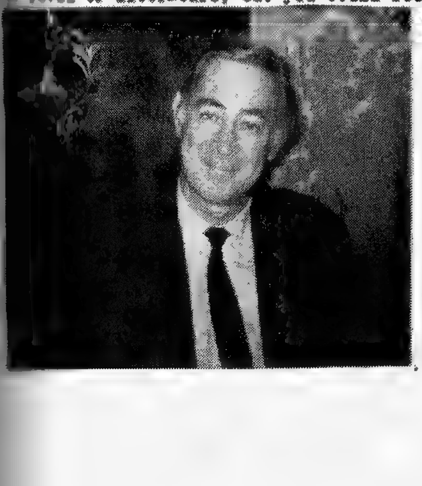
Kane explained that having finally succeeded in snatching the attention of a thinking audience, comics had nothing to give them. Then they would turn away to other things that competed for their attention.

"Comics hadn't always had such wide public acceptance", Kane told his audience. There was the first 'Golden Age' with comics rising to great popularity and many publishers competing with each other. Then the Golden Age became as sounding brass for reasons all comic fans know.

There was another reason. Comic books had grabbed imaginations which gave nothing new. Stenciled and duplicated plots were being turned out by the thousands and interest died.

"Comics remained in a doldrum and then came a great ten years," declared Kane. "Superheroes had gotten off well with National. Then Stan came in, with Jack Kirby, and just revolutionized the whole superhero thing. Because Jack was allowed to do his thing and Stan supported and added to it, comics became as vital, and as direct, and as substantial, and as dimensional as ever they were--better than they were. Jack was doing better work than ever before, and the whole field was upset by Jack's momentum and pulled along after him."

"And also" Kane added, "people started to realize that comics had qualities you could respect. You couldn't necessarily respect the level of literature, but you could respect the quality of the artwork; its vitality, directness of expression, skill, and inventiveness on Jack's part. You could respect all of the substantial and abstract qualities that first rate comic art gives and has always given. Finally, comic books became something other than the stepchild of the syndicated strip. It's been a ten-year, wild carreening ride, but we're at the end of the line. Once again comics are offering nothing new: once again they're destined for a downfall, even at a time when they are enjoying their highest levil of prestige - Unless there is a radical shakeup.



Publishers are going to have to strive to sustain interest and support. They are going to have to work to give their products meaning and something important to say. Give them substance and still make them entertaining. I think that Harvey Kurtzman, when he was with E.C. came the closest to giving comics substance, but not harming the intertainment quality in the process. Harvey heightened it--because he gave it greater variety. His writing had things substantial enough so that anyone could enjoy and respect it."

"Now is the time for publishers,' stated Kane, 'to start constantly delivering and consistently appealing to intelligence and taste. New directions must be found."

"Unfortunately," Kane commented, "Publishers always go back to the most conservative and reactionary of what can be done. When sales are good, they say "Go Wild, Take All the Freedom You Need!" but when books don't sell, instead of exploring new areas, it's "Let's go back to the safe and sane, the literal but the non-imaginative."

"I think,"he prognosticated, "that's where we're heading. I think it interesting that ultimately, after twenty-five or 30 years, there are only 2 publishers of consequence, who are fighting to obtain the interest of readers and sales. This, compared to what they might be, are quite bad. Thus, they'll go back to safer less controversial subjects."

"If that happens," he warned, "I don't think it will be possible for comics to rebuild. It's possible if you burn what's left behind, but not if you keep trying to reconstruct a temple out of lumber –– you can't do it."

Are new directions being explored? "Yes," said Kane", but not by publishers. "I think that fandom, and the underground, are doing the things that are vital. I don't say that they're the best –– I don't say that they can't be done better –– but they're exploring areas that are more interesting."

"Fans", he criticized, "are awkward, without skill, and sometimes ignorant of good taste, but at the same time," he praised, "their passion carries them through areas that publishers would never dare go."

"Some of their efforts might be considered objectionable by the standards of the Code, but", Kane commented, "obviously, if you dont offend anyone; then just as obviously you don't have anything to really say or offer."

To the applause of fans, Kane avowed, "You can't keep giving readers 'Archie!' You can't continue serving the primitive material, popular in the 30's and the 40's. You can't fall back on appeal prevelant in the 50's. The world has changed. The old offerings are not going to sustain the people of today. The people who are capturing colleges and reading Hesse. You've got to find whole new exciting areas for these new readers."

"Comics will have to turn to more substantial things...more intensive topics about life, love, and death –– like the movies, more dimensional, otherwise, the whole thing flies into the sea. We've reached that point."

Kane did not elaborate on that last phrase –– he didn't have to.

"It's time to start getting rid of losers, who've fallen into comics because they couldn't make it elsewhere!" Gil Kane hammered.

"It's time to write comics that have something to say! Comics that won't insult the intelligence of people who aren't with it, in terms of the artwork. Otherwise, it's childhood's end!"

To thunderous applause, Gil Kane's keynote address ended. We now switch to our anchor man, Bob Cosgrove, who relates Mr. Kane's question and answer period.

His point forcefully made, Kane then accepted questions from the floor. In answer to his challenge, one fan asked Kane about Bob Brown's work, in relation to his comments on "the vitality of artwork."

Replied Kane: "I think Bob Brown is a very substantial artist. He'll do anything you want, if he understands it –– that's one of the big problems of this business –– you have to be able to explain and enlarge on on what you want. Bob Brown has enormous skill, but anyone gets tired. And I'm not talking about anyone in particular now. If the writing was better, these people would be encouraged to realize their full potential. Comics are vacillating because of the restrictions and you're tied by publishers."

"How do you avoid that?" Kane queried, "One thing, is to do what the fans are doing. Bill Spicer has a nice little magazine for himself, and then there's WITZEND. The freedom of the first rate fan-prozines is the direction in which comics should go."

RICH
BUCKLER

While commenting on another question, Kane affirmed that the dissatisfied artists, the "gadflys –– the trouble-makers, are the only conscience of a publishing company."

Did Kane think that fandom was the best solution? "The trouble with fandom", he replied, "is that the movement has a singular direct appeal, to a very specialized audience. Most people don't know that fanzines exist. Even members of fandom aren't always aware of what's going on."

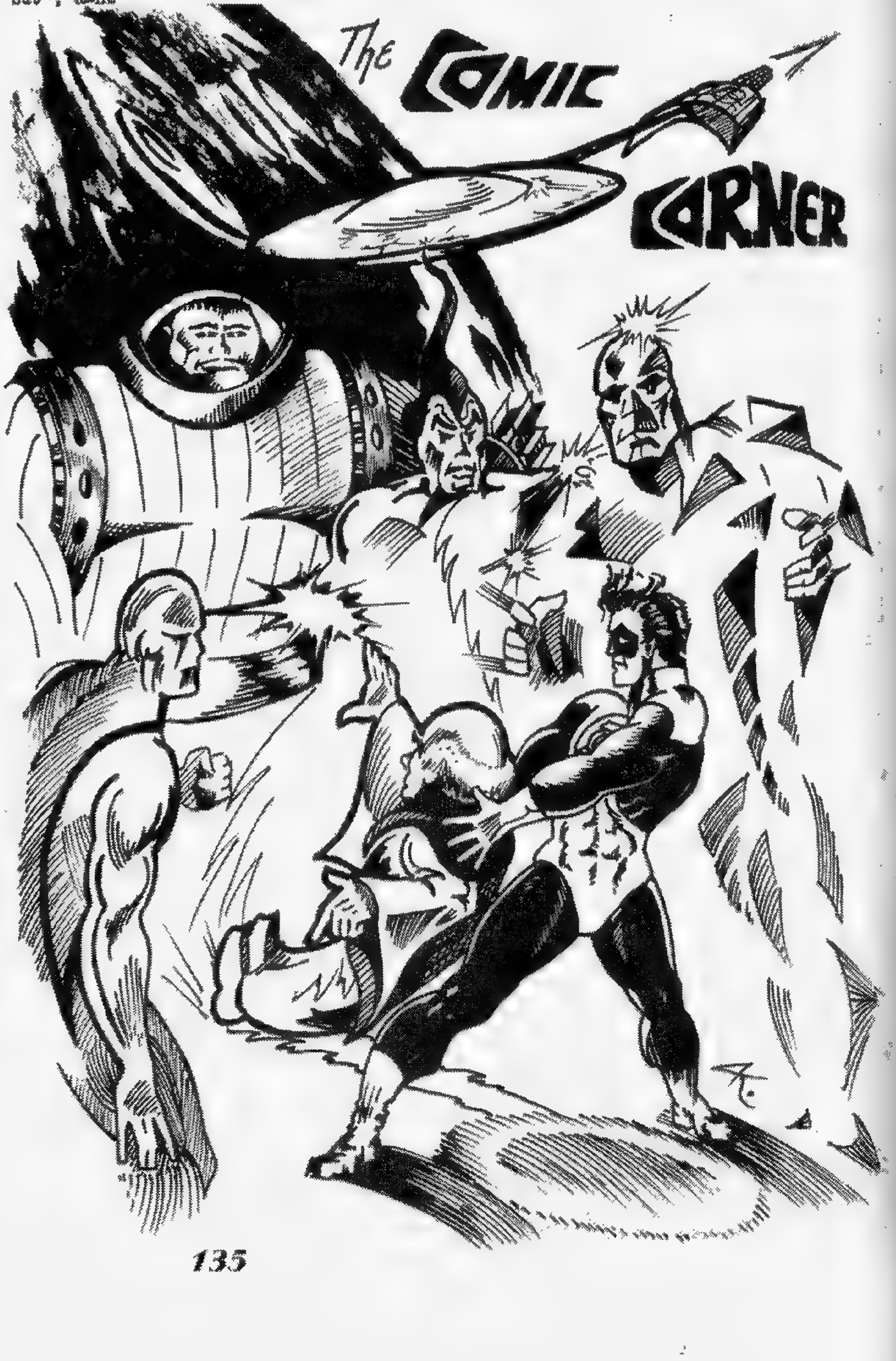
Did Kane feel that comics could present a philosophy without losing entertainment value? "Sure. Look at Harvey Kurtzman's stuff. That had a philosophy. Harvey said that the whole idea of shooting people is horrible –– that death, no matter where it is, in what dark small place it comes, is terrible. There's a philosophy there. Harvey's stuff was intended to make money, but also to give Harvey as much expression as he could muster."

Kane added, accussingly, "There's no market for Harvey's expression anymore."

One reader asked what Kane thought would be next in the line of trends. "A return to teenage material. Everything will look like 'Archie', and the quality of everything, including Archie, will go down. The only thing that kept comics alive was variety."

"Once," Kane explained, "Harvey had animation; Archie, teen; Marvel, superheroes; and DC had a good, diversified line."

Kane did not feel that the Super Hero was exhausted, but said that "Everyone has been turning out super hero material for ten solid years."



"I think," Kane affirmed, "that Jack Kirby is the greatest. I really do. I think that he's one of the best artists, who deserves to be ranked with Foster, Caniff, and Raymond. I think that Jack is absolutely unappreciated for what he's done and achieved and for what he's capable of."

"But," he objected, "Jack has carried the industry for ten years."

"I think that, from the Super Hero, the easiest, best step will be science fiction."

How did Kane rate Gold Key and Dell's creative efforts? "It's just terrible material and they just keep on grinding it out."

When one fan suggested that EC's failure proved that there could be no "good" comics, Kane countered, "Because they didn't last forever? So what? They had pressures from many sides...they began to run out of steam...and they had distribution problems no one else had. The fact remains, that for quite a while, they sold well, and they produced the only mature thing ever done in comics."

After Kane explained that he had altered Green Lantern's costume "as a design problem", one fan asked if comics would ever acheive acceptance. "Sure, there are people of enormous vitality, skill and grace--people like [illegible], Fellini, and Bradbury, who support comics. The big problem, though, is that they have to be produced on a factory basis, month after month."

While hitting on work pressure, Kane also said that artists who spend days on a single panel don't always show what their true measure of talent is. "Give anyone a year to do something and he can usually do a half-decent job."

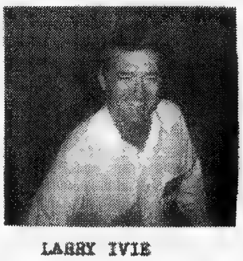
"It depends," said Kane, "on you. If you want glory and greatness, put ten years in a single panel. If you'd rather eat, develop some speed."

It was at this point, while Kane spoke of "glory and greatness," that Phil Seuling presented Kane with a plaque, adding that no presentation had ever given him more pleasure.

The plaque read, "To Gil Kane - For the dramatic power of his style, and the imaginative intelligence he has contributed to the field of comic art."

Not too many fans would argue with that.

DONNA L. ASTIN



LARRY IVIE

(Pub. of Monsters and Heroes.)

Intermission

with Martin L. Greim

There was to be a slight pause before the next program, a panel on "Economics and Comics", so I left Tom Fagan, Rich Buckler and Ellie and walked into the dealers room.

In this room, fans were buying comics, and related material, both new and old. I walked among the tables, picking up reference material for a special article, to be printed sometime next year in Comic Crusader.

One dealer had toys of all kinds, relating to comics, for sale. There were Buck Rogers ray-guns, puzzles with superheroes pictured on them, metal casting sets, clocks, puppets, rings and games.

Further along, there was a table filled with EC's. This dealer had almost a complete run of these mags and needless to say, he did a booming business.

Another dealer, who was doing a booming business, was my friend and dealer from my area of Massachusetts, Stan Darcey. He was aided by Bill Devine, a fan from Braintree, Mass. who knew Bob Cosgrove and who I had met once or twice before at Stan's. They asked me about Bob's illness, and having called home earlier, I was able to tell them that he was feeling much better.

I left the dealers room and went into the display room. It was in this room, that my Flash Gordon was hung, along with other art and rare comic material. I felt honored to have my work displayed with work by Gray Morrow, (he had done a Prince Valiant and Rip Kirby montage) John Fantucchio and Vaughn Bode.

It was here, I met Bill Wilson, publisher of the fanzine "The Collector". We chatted for a while and were soon joined by John Fantucchio. After a while, John became engaged in conversation with the talented Larry Ivie. Being a fan of Larry's, I went over to listen. Larry was saying he loved John's art, but he couldn't read his signature. John disputed that by saying it was stylized. Larry related how his recent issue was so rushed, that he had to use the painting of Altron Boy, in his table of contents page, for his cover. He also told of the printing problems, which he hoped he'd straightened out.

Larry posed for a photo, as I asked him how his distribution on Monsters and Heroes was. He replied, that it was a lot better than his early issues and that it should be a lot easier to find on the news stands.

The program was about to start, so I started back to the lecture hall. On my way, I passed Tom Fagan's friend and staff photographer, A.J. Marro. A.J., who is almost a double for Michael Pollard (of Bonnie & Clyde fame) had a couple of girls convinced that he was Pollard and was signing autographs. OK - A.J.!

We now return to Bob Cosgrove who'll tell you about "Economics and Comics".

ECONOMICS AND THE COMICS

(DICK GIORDANO)

(ROY and JEAN THOMAS)
with TOM FAGAN

Reporter...BOB COSGROVE

"Economics and the Comics" got off to a quick start with Jim Warren asking if there were any other publishers in the room or on the panel. When no voice or hand was raised, he gloated that he was "unique" since he could talk from the stockholders viewpoint. "And, he added, that's just what we're going to talk about: money. What I'm gonna say is going to offend some people, but I want you to know that four years ago I gave a talk to the comic convention and I haven't been invited back since, because I did offend some people. I offended Leonard Darvin of the comics code and I offended a couple of others. So now, after four years, they said, "Jimmy, you've been a good boy, and we want you back. Nobody from the comics code is here, which shows you how much they think of the industry, no other publisher is here, which shows you how much they think of you. I'll give it to you as straight as I can. Don't misquote me in any of your fanzines. Don't quote me out of context or misquote me."

Dick Giordano then picked up the ball by discussing a pet peeve, fans that don't realize that comics are put out to make money. "Thus", he said, "this panel is an important one."

The third and last member of the panel, Roy Thomas, began by saying that anything he could say would be the same as what Dick said, and then threw the floor open to questions.

The first question was "Has there been a drop in sales figures relative to last year?" After about five minutes of explaining how he would answer it from the viewpoint of Warren, and how the question was really irrelevant, since expenses and other factors changed greatly, Warren replied: "Our sales figures are confidential."

Giordano summed up DC's sales with "Super hero: down. Others: up."

Roy then came in with "Marvel, being more commited to Super heroes than the other companies, is down in sales, as are all of Nationals books." A bit of laughter shook the room. He then added that he was refering to their Super-hero line. He also said that sales figures in the last months and in the coming months were highly relative because of the change in distributors, to Curtis publishing.

When one fan asked how much a book had to make, Warren replied that "any book that makes a dollar, we keep. Any book that loses a dollar we drop." After asking if that "answered the fan's question as to Warren Publishing's policies", Warren said that "Making a profit is not the most important thing at Warren Publishing Co. It's the only thing!

When one fan asked how much economic weight the fans had, Warren laughed for five minutes before he could bring himself to answer the question.

Roy explained that the sales on Dr. Strange rose when he was put in a costume, even though everyone, including Stan, hated the idea. "Nobody wanted to see a guy in a skirt, and tights, and greying temples, running around casting a spell that looked like Jello coming out of his hands. We either had to change the costume, or the stories, and we didn't want to sacrifice the story."

When one fan asked why a recent issue of Famous Monsters had been better than usual, Warren, after telling him what a good question that was, said that it had nothing to do with money, but that he always tried to raise the quality of his books because of ego. "I like to see my name on something I can be proud of."

Roy revealed that Spiderman Spectacular was an economic success, but could not be continued because the new printer couldn't publish a book that size.

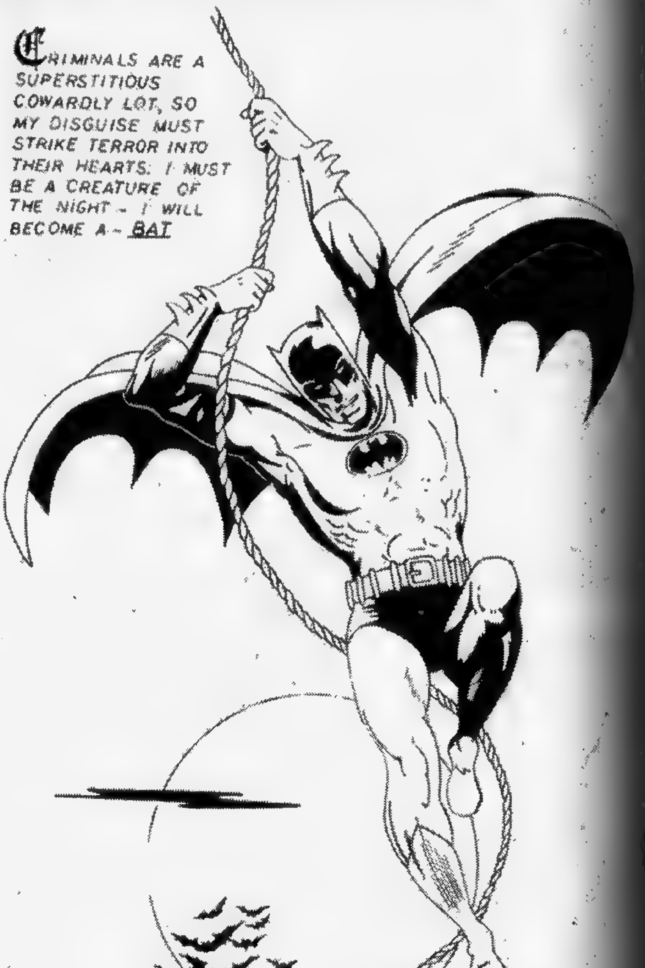
Did the illustrator of a book effect the sales? Roy answered that it didn't, substantially. When Spiderman lost Ditko, who Roy regarded as one of the best illustrators around, it went from the second best seller, in the Marvel line, to THE BEST. "Usually, said Roy, "a book that has a regular illustrator sells better than an issue drawn by everyone from the office boy on up. Under Trimpe, the Hulk is doing better because readers have come to expect art in Herb's style."

Commenting on rising prices, Warren explained that Roy and Dick raised their price, and that they had a statement in their books (Giordano: "I didn't write that. It was a reprint." Warren: "I knew you didn't write that. You know how? I could tell because it wasn't creative.") that said: "Dear reader, We hate to tell you this, but you already know cause you bought this magazine, but blah, blah, blah, and all this business about rising costs, etc. and all this crap, and we hope you'll still buy us, cause we love ya, blah, blah, blah."

"Now we had a statement, in our new issues of Creepy, Eerie and Vampirella, when we raised our price from forty cents to fifty cents. And this is what our statement says, cause I wrote it:

"Dear reader:

We have raised our price from forty cents to fifty cents. Period. Paragraph. We did this not because of the rising costs, comma, not because of increased salaries we had to pay our editors and make a higher return on their dollar investment. And Mr. Warren, comma, the President, capital P, has been working so long and hard that we feel he needs a rest, a couple of times a year, and we


CRIMINALS ARE A SUPERSTITIOUS COWARDLY LOT, SO MY DISGUISE MUST STRIKE TERROR INTO THEIR HEARTS. I MUST BE A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT - I WILL BECOME A - BAT

send him to St. Thomas or Los Vegas, or something, and somebody's gotta pay the freight, and you, Dear reader, are IT.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren Publishing.

P.S. THERE'S NOT A DAMN THING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT."

(*Note - It is a shame Mr. Warren's above statement did not appear in his magazines, for I think it was one of the greatest things I've ever heard. - MLG)

Warren, asked about doing a super-hero book, said "Hell no! Who can top Stan Lee?" and furthur explained that in his field, he was tops, and that he was going to play it safe and stay with the things he knew. "I'd rather be the best guy doing one small thing, then a mediocre guy trying to do everything." He asserted it wasn'T a cop-out. "I hate mediocrity. Mediocrity STINKS."

What does Marvel have in store? "Oh have we got things in store for YOU!" Roy Thomas asserted as he revealed the publication of Peter the Little Pest, and Homer the Happy Ghost. He assured the fans that "this is not the direction we intend to go. As you know, we have the two mystery books, 'Tower of Shadows' and 'Chamber of Whatever it is'. We went through five or six titles, before we found something that would scare Mr. Darvin of the Comics Code."

At this point, Giordano, Warren, and Thomas launched into a three-prong attack on the "stupidity of the average newsdealer." Roy related, to the horror of the fans, that newsdealers around the country were unable to read the word "Hulk" on Steranko's Hulk Annual cover, and thus returned the bottom half of the mag "Battles the Inhumans" for credit. He also told how newsdealers would remove one comic from the comic pac, send the pac back for credit, and then the comic too.

Dick explained that some retailers returned the top of a promotional cover which accompanied the magazine.

Warren, gallantly, did not place the blame on the newsdealer. "First God created the retailer. For practice. THEN he created the wholesaler!"

At this point, to support the claims of his cohorts, Warren explained that he was putting out a new book called Vampirella, and that (holding up the book with the Frazetta cover) "Vampirella is a girl." An appreciative murmur swept the audience. "When we sent the cover promotional out to the wholesalers, they said "Impossible, we won't distribute this." I said, "Why not?" They said, "Because she's a girl. She has breasts. She has a crotch." I said, "So what?" He said, "Children don't know this." The wholesalers out there refuse to believe that women have breasts on them. Now there's only one organization I know of that believes that...The Comics Code. But I have to get on long distance phone, with the owner of the agency and explain to this fifty-seven year old man, that women have breasts, that the buyers, who are fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, are aware of this, they've learned it in school, and that he should have no trepidation about putting this on the newstands."

"So," he added, "One of them said to me, 'Could you cover them up a little?" And I said, "No. Cause if we cover them up, we're gonna ruin the character, that Frank Frazetta created. And Frank gets very mad. And he's Italian. And he'll come down and kill you."

After that statement, anything the three could add, had to be, and was, anticlimactic.

LATER ON.....

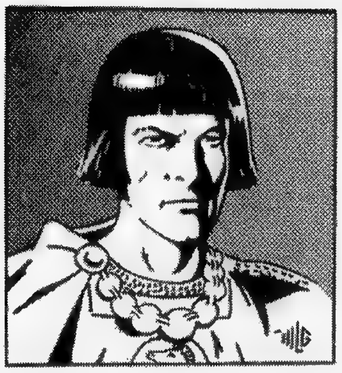
Reporter...Martin L. Greim

Starvation set in after "Economics and Comics", so I was forced to miss Vin Sullivan's talk on the "Beginnings of Comics". Ellie, Tom, A.J. and I left the con for some food. On our way out, I ran into Al Bradford, (friend and reporter) who told me he was staying at the Y.M.C.A. not far from the hotel. Al proved to be a big help, especially on his reporting of the "Underground Comics".

After eating, we returned to the Statler-Hilton where the first auction was about to take place. Phil Seuling, as the auctioneer. It's often said, that Phil missed his calling in life. He should have been an auctioneer. He's great at it! Original art, Golden Age comics, Big Little Books, and original newspaper strip art, were only a few of the items Phil auctioned off. It was a fun time for all.

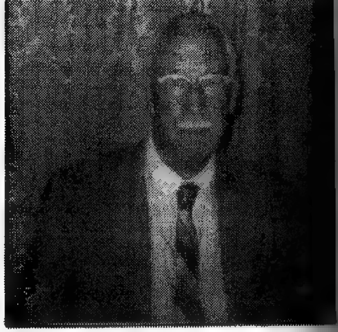
I've said it before and I'll say it again..."Every time I go to New York, I always feel right at home. Seven of the reasons, for my feeling this way, are in the photo to the left. These fans (and Pro) extend such a welcome, that you can't help but feel at home. I'm proud to know them. From left to right: Frank McLaughlin (Judo-Master artist) Stan Landman, Irene Vartanoff, (yes there really is a Poison I.V.) Eliot Wagner, Len Wein, (one hell of a guy and artist) Marv Wolfman, (smile pretty, for the camera, Marv.) and last, but not least, Mark Hanerfeld. (DC's Wonderful World of Comics writer, and publisher of "On The Drawing Board".

Ellie and I spent a most enjoyable evening, doing the town with them and finally going back to our room to talk comics, etc, 'till the wee-hours of the morning. One doesn't get much sleep at a Comic Con.



HAL FOSTER

A Prince of a Fellow ~



Reporter...Martin L. Greim

INTRODUCTION:

July 5 - "Up at the crack of dawn. Out in the fields by noon."

That opening statement somewhat paraphrases my awaking on the morning of the second day of the con. Being up late, the night before, the crack of dawn for me was about 10:30 a.m.

After breakfast, Ellie and I went upstairs to the con. There, we found that Harvey Kurtzman, one of the guests of honor at the Awards Luncheon, would not be attending, due to a prior commitment in California.

As nothing special was happening that morning, we joined Tom Fagan in an expedition up town, to find the recent comics. This expedition took so long, we almost missed the luncheon. We raced back, just in time to get a table with John Fantucchio.

After catching my breath, I turned and noted the head table. Seated on the left end were Ed Aprill and Gil Kane. On the right were Phil and Carol Seuling and John Benson. Finally, sitting between them, was the man who not only created a ledgend, but is a ledgend himself... **HAL FOSTER!**

Hal Foster, who in 1931 began illustrating the daily and Sunday Tarzan newspaper strips. Hal Foster, who in 1937 created a character who has become a ledgend... **PRINCE VALIANT.**

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Foster was a child of the outdoors. In his early teens, he earned a living as a fur trapper and later as a guide in remote areas of Western Ontario and Northern Manitoba. Even today, he enjoys hunting and fishing.

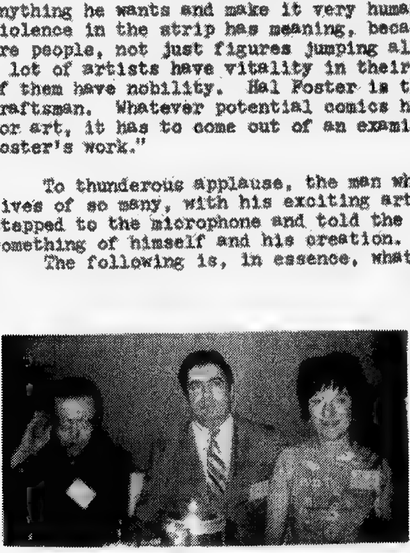
Mr. Foster established a quality and style in his art that has won him many awards. Awards, such as the Banshee Silver Lady Award and The Reuben Award in 1957.

A hush fell over the luncheon guests, as Gil Kane introduced Hal Foster.

"What Hal Foster brought into comics was an intellegence and a spirit that carried the tradition of the romantic hero, as we know him. He is absolutely the father of the whole romantic adventure hero saga, that adventure comics is about. One of the great things about his work, is that in the area of romance, he has brought restraint. Naturalism is the one thing you hardly ever find in romance. You usually find an accentuated quality where it is not real. He can tell a story and make it anything he wants and make it very human, where any violence in the strip has meaning, because the characters are people, not just figures jumping all over the page. A lot of artists have vitality in their work, hardly any of them have nobility. Hal Foster is the most superb of craftsman. Whatever potential comics have, as a basis for art, it has to come out of an examination of Mr. Foster's work."

To thunderous applause, the man who has enriched the lives of so many, with his exciting art and story-telling, stepped to the microphone and told the assembled guests something of himself and his creation.

The following is, in essence, what he said.



TOM FAGAN
JOHN FANTUCCHIO
MARY FANTUCCHIO
At the Awards Luncheon

Hal Foster was living in Winnipeg, Canada, when he started serious drawing. His father had gone bankrupt, in mid-winter and he had to quit school and go to work. Not wanting to end his artistic endeavors, he used himself as a model, by standing in front of a mirror. Because of the Canadian cold, he learned to sketch very quickly. He found his early work very unsatisfactory.

His first professional job was in catalogues - illustrating ladies underwear. He wanted a bigger chance, so he rode a bicycle to Chicago. No easy trip, from Canada to Chicago. Upon ariving, he promptly got robbed. He was left with nothing but the clothes on his back and his bicycle. He finally enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago and later graduated to the Academy of Fine Arts and the National Academy. It was here, that all his past experience in art jelled together. The originality of figure movements in Tarzan, and his sense of naturalness, was helped by his athletic ability. Foster was a good athelete, but admits that his football and baseball were mediocre.

Mr. Foster told how the mechanical structure of the body is important. Without a skeleton, there can be no proper placement of muscles. He also said to study other artists, to get better uses. You can enjoy another artist, because he can perhaps solve a problem you can't. So you study him, to learn composition.

How did Mr. Foster arrive at doing Prince Valiant? He was a bit fed up with Tarzan, because he didn't like the story. He wanted to create something of his own. Fascinated by history, he went backwards into history he thought was interesting, to find a contrast. The Crusades lasted only a couple of centuries. Not long enough, so he went all the way back to King Arthur. It was just what he wanted, since no one could prove the reality of this time. Foster wanted to do a fantasy. He was crazy about fairy tales and wanted to slay dragons and giants. This time period seemed to offer a big scope. When Prince Valiant met a dragon, he was really Hal Foster. Foster would have liked to have been like Prince Valiant, if he could. He gave Prince Valiant all the virtues he didn't have. Because of this, Valiant can't get too much out of character. Foster says, as he writes Prince Valiant, Val stands over his shoulder. If Foster gets him out of character, Prince Valiant shakes his head.

A strip like Prince Valiant seems traditional, in a sense of it being told without any modern day life in it. Mr. Foster stated that he has used history of the fifth century. About 200 years of it, to be exact and Prince Valiant is only about 35 now.

There can not be battle scenes all the time and that is the reason for the home life of Prince Valiant. This is to provide a break in the battle, violence and action and to keep the story from getting monotinous.

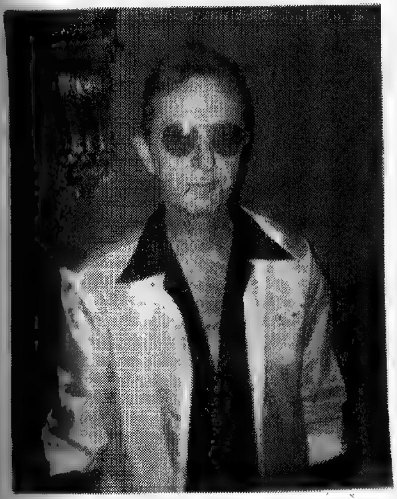
Research is a prime factor in Foster's stories. There was a great deal of research done, to get Prince Valiant to cross the ocean. He had to study winds currents, etc, to make sure the direction he took him was possible. Foster dosen't think the Vikings ever got as far as Nova Scotia.

Hal Foster likes to have something proven, before he writes it. His desire to be authentic, is what made him do his backgrounds in so much detail. He has pictures and movies of Prince Valiant's part of the country, for reference. Terrain, trees, etc., are very important to show what part of the country you are located in. Because of this research, Foster spends 53 hours a week on the stories, in actual physical labor, not counting the time spent on fan mail, etc.

The stories for characters of King Arthur's days are just imagination. There are no portraits of anything of that day. All the armor of Prince Valiant is completely phony. Arthur's knights are dressed in Norman armor and the castles, drawbridges, etc., are of the Norman era, but those did not exist in the time of King Arthur. However, Mr. Foster can not draw it any other way, because it is the impression people have of King Arthur and his times. From his research, it shows that King Arthur would be dressed in bearskin, etc., but that does not go with the "jousting image" of King Arthur's time, so Prince Valiant wears armor.

Foster talked of Prince Valiant's immage. Prince Valiant can do no wrong. He must be honest, upright, and beyond reproach. Anytime he does something that doesn't go with this immage, Foster gets thousands of letters condeming his actions. However, Sir Gawain, on the other hand, can do all the things Prince Valiant would like to do and no one says a thing.

In closing, Mr. Foster said that he does not carry a message, like some of today's strips, because it is not a part of him.



BILL EVERETT

Afterwards: with Martin L. Greim

The luncheon ended and the next event was to be "The EC Panel. However, I knew I would be unable to attend, for I had already aranged to take a few friends with me to see Steve Ditko. (a few friends - more like a small army) I was on my way out, when Ellie said, "Isn't that Bill Everett?" There he was, a man I wanted to meet, since I was able to read Sub-Mariner. I went over to talk to him and at last a dream came true - I Met Bill Everett! He even remembered me, due to my letters to him, and told me that he was doing inking work for Marvel again. Then he told me that he had something for me and later, in the Con, he presented me with a beautiful color drawing of The Sub-Mariner. This meant the world to me. Its been a life long dream, of mine, to own an original Sub-Mariner by Bill Everett. This, of all the great moments at the Con, was the high point for me. Thanks again Bill.

After leaving Bill Everett, Tom, A.J., Rich Buckler, John Fantucchio, Charles Roberts (a friend of John's) and I went over to see Steve Ditko. Steve, as gracious as ever, welcomed my small army of Ditko fans into his studio. For these fans of Steve's, myself included, this was a real treat. Steve showed us some art and tried to answer all our questions. He also showed his sense of humor, when I jokingly asked, why he didn't create a villain for Mr. A. dressed in black. He could call him Mr. Z. Steve then reminded me that we were on the 7th floor and that I was standing next to a window.

We spent a wonderful two hours with Steve and I know my friends and I won't soon forget it. Steve is a wonderful host and one of the nicest guys you could ever want to meet.

While we were at Steve's, the EC Panel was in progress. Since we were all there, that left my wife Ellie to cover it. Now, with Bob Cosgrove, Ellie reports.

The EC Panel

Reporters...Ellie Greim & Bob Cosgrove

As fandom has grown over the years, it has in some ways, matured. The interests of many fans have broadened considerably. No longer is our microcosm confined solely to the escapedes of caped and cowled characters, but it now encompasses funny animal, horror, newspaper strips and virtually every other aspect of comic art.

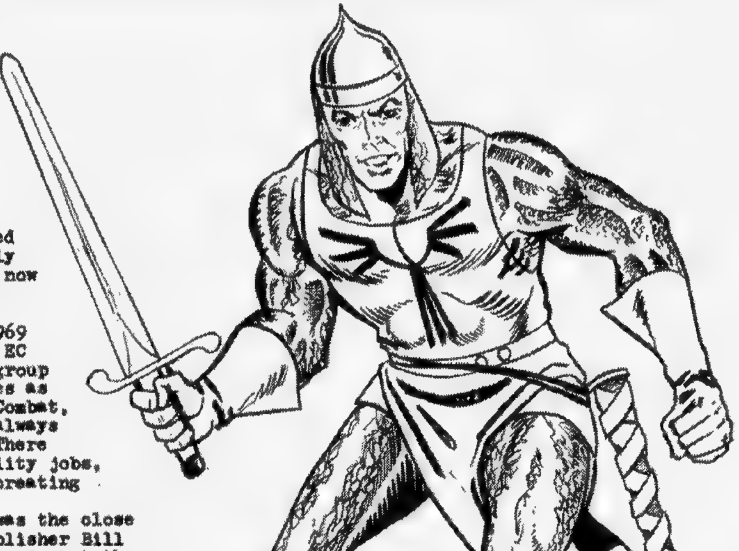
Thus, it was altogether neet and proper that the 1969 N.Y. Con should include a panel on the highly respected EC comics group. EC remains, in general, the best comics group that ever existed. Its titles included such famous names as Haunt of Fear, Weird Fantasy, Aces High, MD, Frontline Combat, and Mad, the only EC title still in existance. EC was always interested in quality of story, art and illustration. There were many people at EC who were not just doing high quality jobs, but who felt that they were working on an art form and creating something comparable with fine art.

Perhaps the most important factor in EC's success was the close relationship between publisher, writer, and artist. Publisher Bill Gaines cared very much about what his people were doing and what they were trying to attempt in their work.

The EC panel included Archie Goodwin, former editor of Creepy and Eerie, which in effect, are slick magazine copies of the EC horror titles; Al Williamson, former EC artist, noted recently for his fine Flash Gordon work at King and his portrayal of Secret agent X-9; John Benson, a first generation EC fan; Rich Hauser, panel moderator and editor of one of the better EC fanzines, Spa Fon; Jerry Weist, editor of the finest EC fanzine available, Squa Tront; and three talented artists, Roy Krenkel, of EC; Gray Morrow, and Angelo Torres, who both have done fine art for Warren Publications.

In their opening remarks, the artists affirmed the close relationship previously mentioned. Al remarked that not only were Feldstein, EC's editor, and Publisher Gaines interested, but so was Johnny Craig, and Harvey Kurtzman. "Writer," he said, "went out of their way to write stories for the individual artists." Angelo Torres added that he had just begun working with Mad and was pleased to find that the same close relationship still existed.

Gray Morrow, after explaining that all he really did was play baseball with the EC artists, added that "Everyone was going to produce 'the" great comic. That, in addition to the fact that EC put the right man on the science fiction material, and indeed the proper people on the proper job in general."

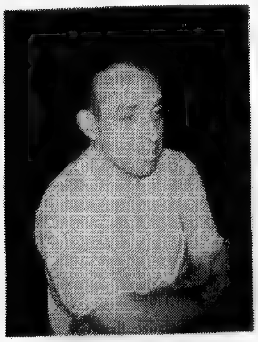


THE SHINING KNIGHT

John Benson, looking at things from a fanish point, explained that "The relationship between the EC fans and EC itself was excellent. The EC fan was a much smaller group in number than today's comic fandom. The best EC magazine was "Hoo Ha" and at its height had only 100 subscribers. All effort on this magazine was for these 100 people. All of the fans felt in a personal way that they were a part of the "happy family" which the artists spoke of."

Such is not the case today, affirmed Rich Hauser, who related that he has "more subscribers today than in other years." Rich also related how when EC designed Mad, a comic book, it got front page headlines in the Hartford Current. "Bill Gaines perverting Kids - Wants them to Sneak Comic Books Into School."

Al Williamson stated that he knew of no artists who ever turned down a job because it was distasteful to him, and that he, personally, had no complaints on any story he got. Benson, however, related that Krigstein once took offense at a story and changed the ending. Feldstein, however, wanted the story to remain as it was, so Bernie did not finish it.



ANGELO TORRES

Jerry, commenting on EC's sometimes criticized horror titles, affirmed that it was the Horror comics that made money, kept EC moving and allowed the science fiction people to do what they desired.

When asked what kind of source material he used for the Martian cities, Al Williamson related that they were original, not swipes, and that Roy Krenkel did 99% of his backgrounds at EC.

In the general question and answer period, some interesting facts came out. We relate them to you in the same helter-skelter order our frantic pencils took them down in.

At EC, panels were drawn, word balloons put in with machine lettering, and the page was then given to the artist to draw, with free license in the space that remained.

In ten years, EC will take over Mad so Gaines can retire, but until that time, he has a free hand.

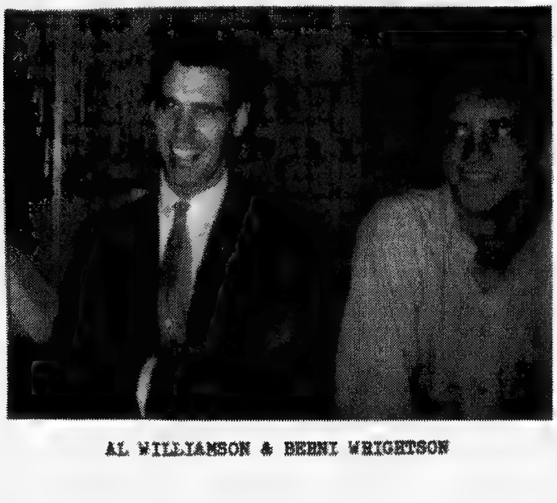
Criticized for the depths of horror to which EC terror titles plummeted, the group revealed that EC HAD to, to keep sales up with other crud horror-comic imitators.

Altho' horror and Mad kept EC going, the other titles were done mainly because the staff enjoyed doing them---especially the science fiction titles, which operated completely in the red for a year and a half. The best SF, done by the most respected artists, Wood, Williamson, and Frazetta, never sold. War comics did well in the war years, partly because when they started they were more more dynamic, and less technical.

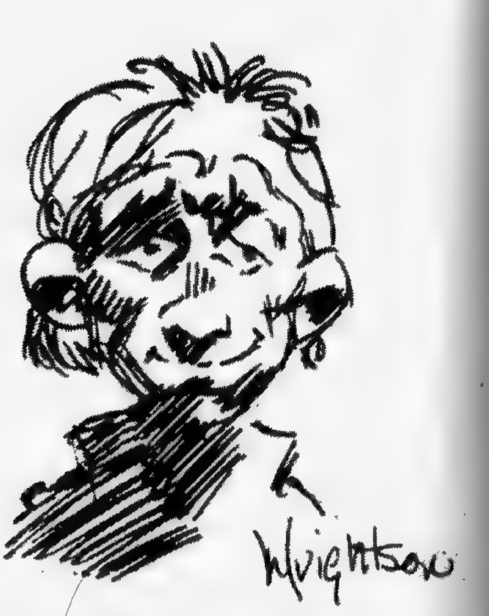
Reed Crandall, like many artists, was not sought out by EC, but simply came to work for them because he admired their work, notably for Mad.

In closing, the panel reaffirmed the high value EC placed on story content. Feeling that it was important as the art. They were very strict on format, and as previously stated, tried to write stories with a particular artist in mind.

In short, for the first time, there existed a feeling of wanting to do something better, and having fun with it. There was a constant desire to create something superior to the ordinary comic book. Most EC fanzines end their articles with some sort of statement to the effect that nobody will ever surpass the "glory that was EC." We won't say that, because we think that's a defeatest attitude. What man creates, he can recreate, and more than that, he can surpass. The question is, will he? If Gil Kane, and many others, are right, he will have to.



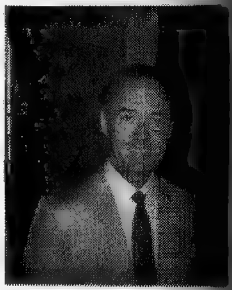
AL WILLIAMSON & BERNI WRIGHTSON



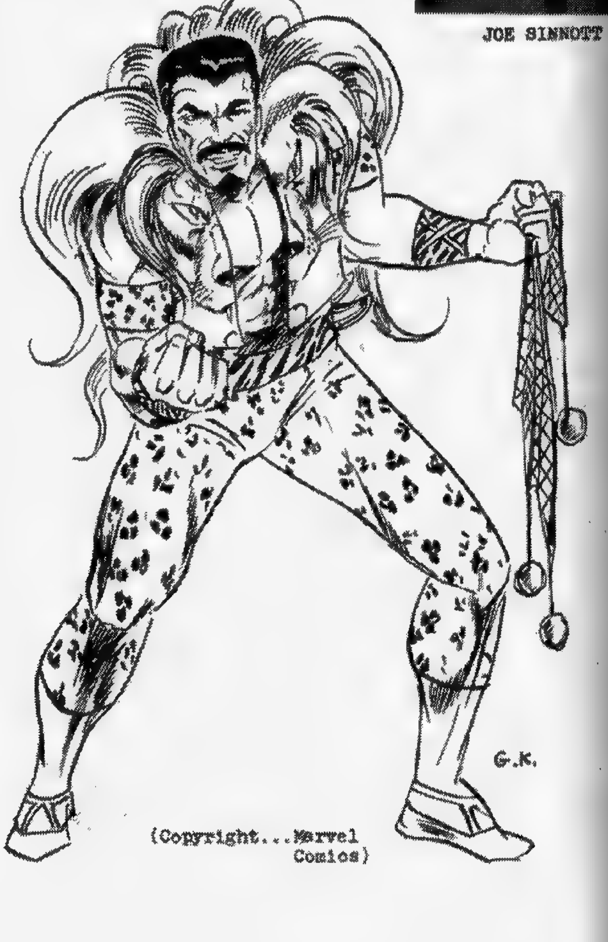
*SIDELINE:

One of the top inkers, in the business, is JOE SINNOTT.

A man who has never seen Kirby, Colan, or Buscema and who hasn't seen Stan Lee in ten years, made his appearance at the con. Joe kindly posed for this photo, while telling me that he works exclusively from his home and that he inks about three pages of work a day. - MLG



JOE SINNOTT



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COMICS UNDERGROUND

Reporter...Al Bradford

One of the most unusual, and certainly the most interesting events at the Convention, was the panel discussion on "Underground Comics". Before I attempt to define, if such is possible, the term "underground comics", let me first mention the members of the panel. They were: and Simon Dietch(*the infamous Dietch brothers, as they refered to themselves) "Spain" Rodriguez, an underground columnist named D.A. Latimer, Trina Robbins authoress of "Panthea", a kind of female Animan), Roger Brand (with whom any reader of Witzend should be familiar), and last but not least, an engaging wierdo, named Rick Griffin, who strongly resembled Jim Morrison.

Anyway, I said earlier that I'd try to define "underground comics". They are quite simply, comics which are not, for one reason or another, acceptable to the masses. Unfortunately, the reason most underground comics are not acceptable is that they are in abomnible taste; in fact, some are downright gross! This is really a shame, because, like good fanzines awash in a sea of crud, good underground comics are kept underground by untalented pornographers. Basically, one of the intrinsic characteristics of underground comics, which supplies the reason for both the strength and weaknesses of the genre, is that underground comics are more or less non-profit, and therefore the men and women who create them pretty much do as they damn well please. Underground cartoonists don't do anything so it will sell. (if it does sell, so much the better, ofcourse) they do what they want to. That's why such totally uncommercial things as Rick Griffin's "Oxo", a surrealistic nonsense strip, with Carl Barks - oriented shapes, appears strictly for the heck of it. Even Sturdy Steve Ditko can be classified as an underground cartoonist...cranking out his ultra-conservative fables for no other reason than the fact that it's his bag.

While underground comicdom produces much more than its share of garbage, I don't want to mislead anyone into thinking that it's all bad. No, to assume this would be greatly unfair to the Robert Crumbs, Roger Brands and Gilbert Sheltons down there in the underground, some of the unsung, great men who are doing and have been doing really creative things.

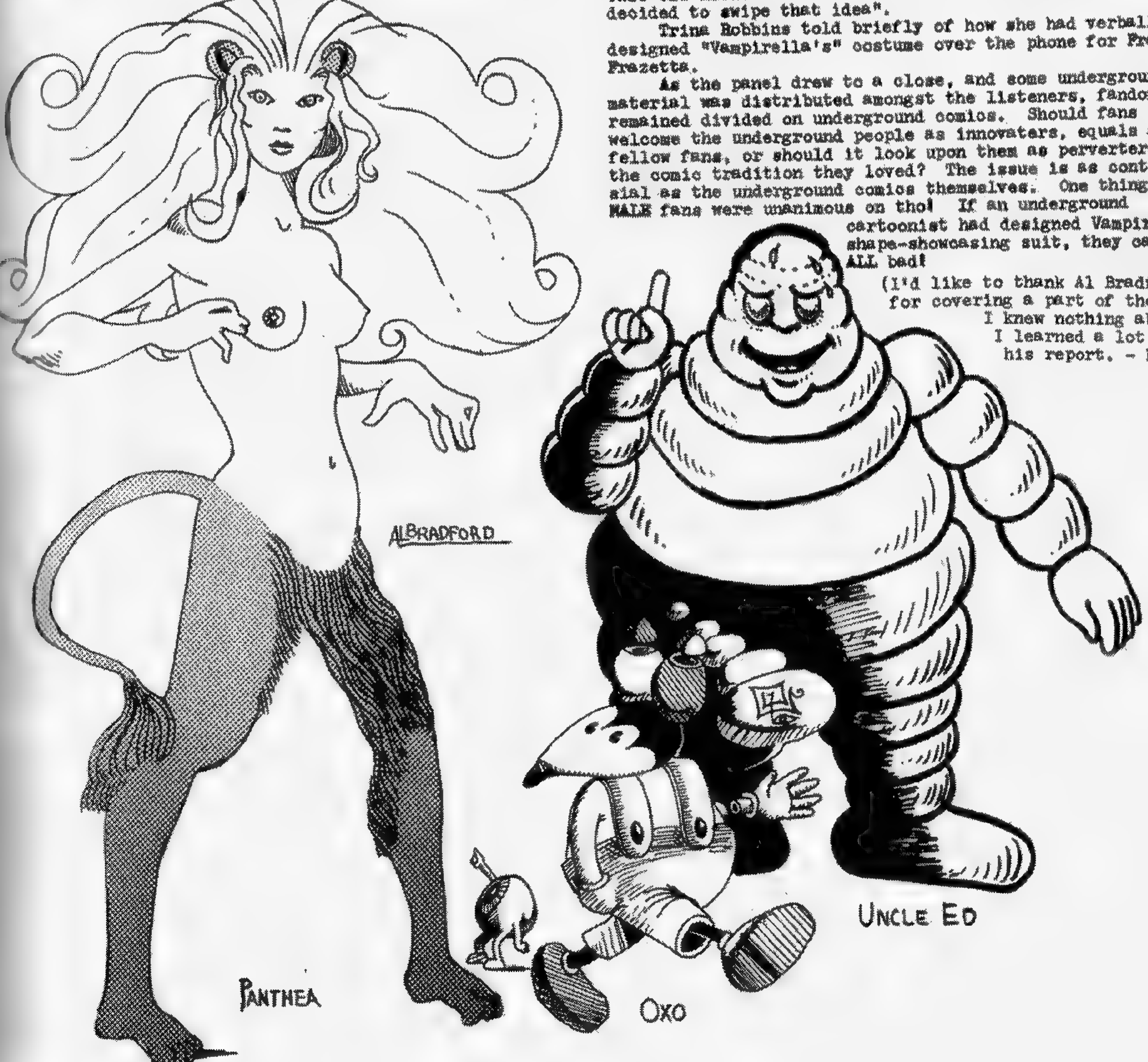
Such, at least, was the consensus of the panel, whose members, after introducing themselves, recounted amusing anecdotes as the passed the microphone down the line.

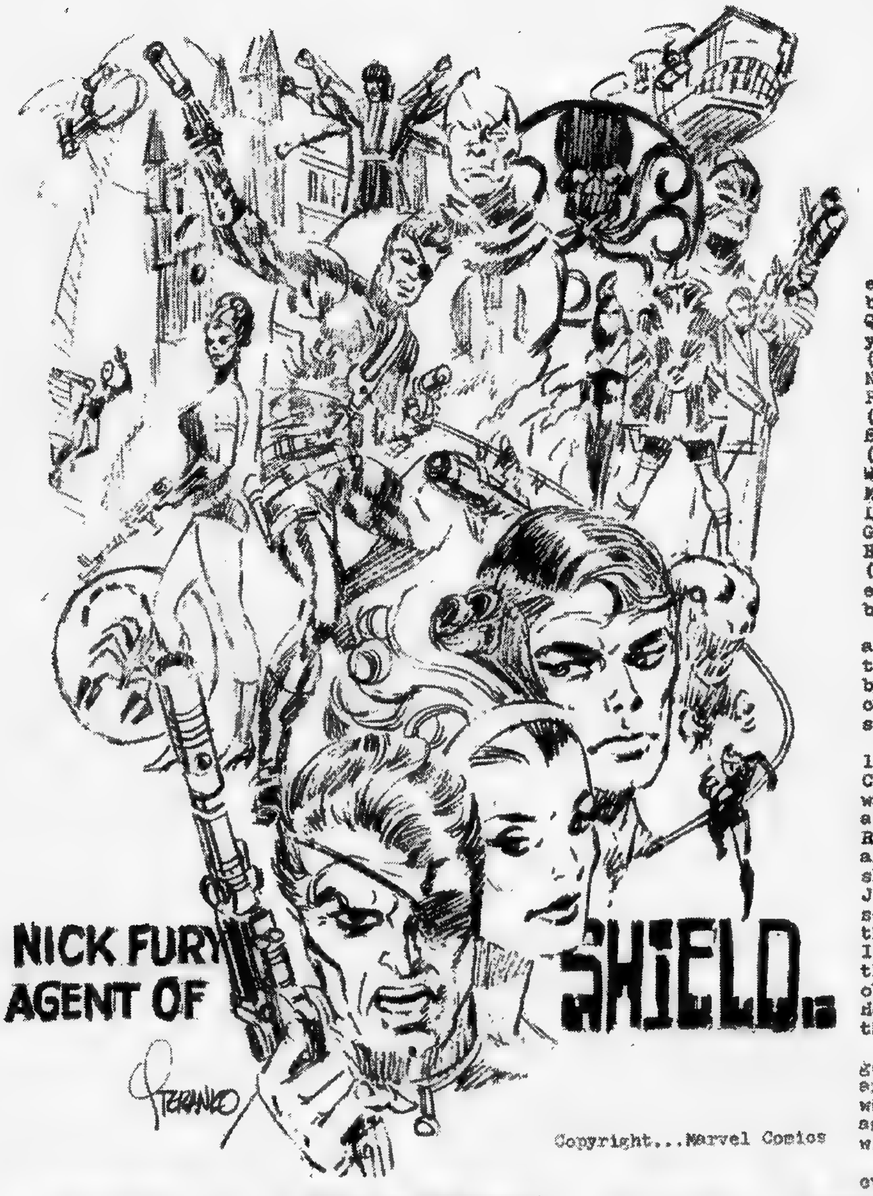
Simon Dietch recounted the creation of his character, "Uncle Ed": "It was the middle of the night and I was walking around the streets of New York trying to come up with an idea for a strip. Then, in a store window, I saw this old Michelin X tire ad, with the rubber man, and I decided to swipe that idea".

Trina Robbins told briefly of how she had verbally designed "Vampirella's" costume over the phone for Frank Frazetta.

As the panel drew to a close, and some underground material was distributed amongst the listeners, fandom remained divided on underground comics. Should fans welcome the underground people as innovaters, equals and fellow fans, or should it look upon them as perverters of the comic tradition they loved? The issue is as controversial as the underground comics themselves. One thing the MALE fans were unanimous on tho! If an underground cartoonist had designed Vampirella's shape-showcasing suit, they can't be ALL bad!

(I'd like to thank Al Bradford for covering a part of the Con I knew nothing about. I learned a lot from his report. - MLG)





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After the Ball was Over

Reporter...Martin L. Greim

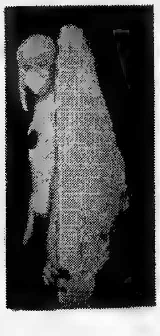
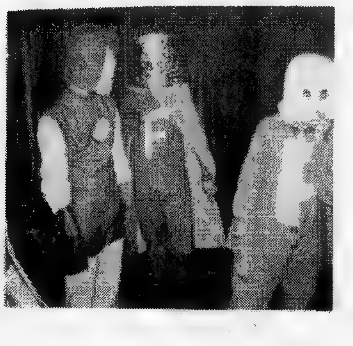
A feature of the Con, that everyone enjoys, is The Costume Ball. Pictured below, are a few of the participants. Quite a few people came in costume, this year. People such as...Armand Eisen (Spectre) Tom Watkins (Wonder Warthog) Neal Tillotson (Forbushman) Carolyn Paurowski (Emma Peel) Paul Jordan (Man in Black called Fate - *First Prize) Edwin Murray (Dr. Fate) Saul Weinstein (Forbushman) Terry Murry (Iron Man) David Womazoff (Hawkman) Heather Seuling (Mickey Mouse) Gwen Seuling (Black Canary) Noelle Lynn Carter (Priest & Priestess of the Moon God of Atlantis) John Boyle (Robin) Howard Dreises (Spectre) Elyse Pines (Wonder Woman - *New) and a last minute entrance by the Red Skull or as he is better know...Tom Fagan.

Tom had waited in a back room, 'till all the other costumed characters had made their entrances, then surprised everyone by his entrance as the Red Skull. As you can see, in a photo below, Tom was a little surprised himself, by one of the costumes.

Later, that evening, Tom, Ellie and I were invited to the room of one of the Costume Ball judges....JIM STERANKO. It was great to see Jim again and we were also joined by another friend of Jim's, Roy Krenkel. Jim showed us some terrific art and joked with Tom Fagan. He also showed us something I won't soon forget. Jim is a master at magic and card tricks, so to entertain us he pulled off one of the greatest card tricks I've ever seen. I've always thought myself pretty much on the ball and always look for the non-obvious, when someone is doing a trick. However, Jim is a lot more on the ball than I am. He mystified me completely.

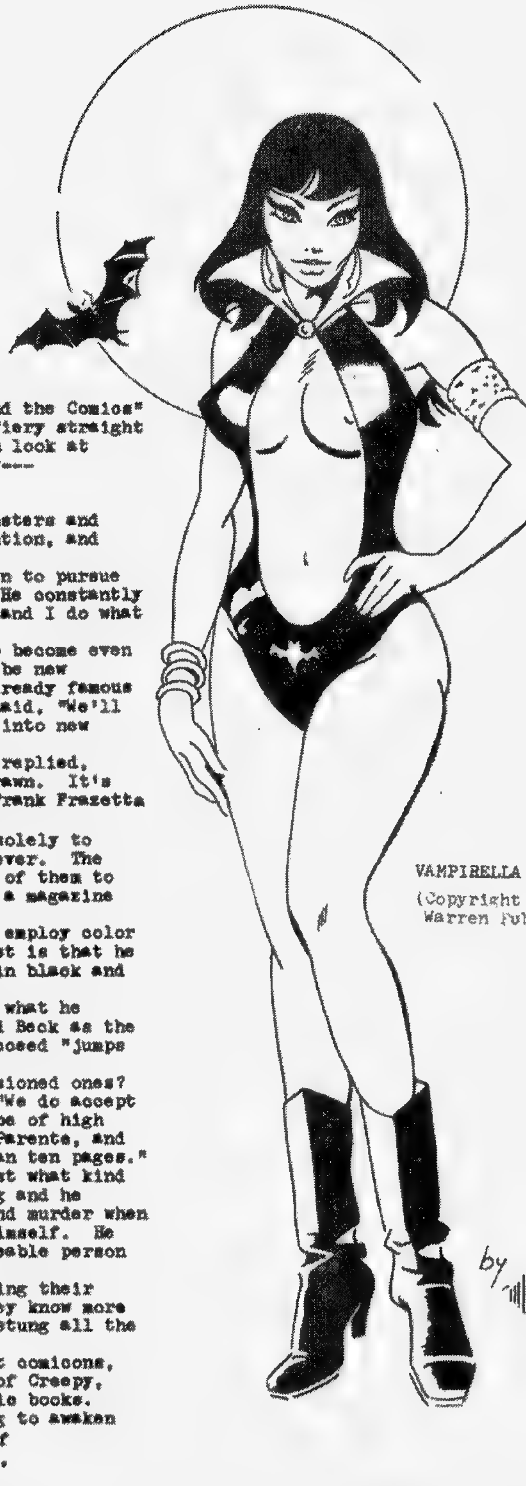
About 2 a.m. what was left of this get-together, went out for coffee and after driving a waitress to near insanity, we called it a night. It has continually amazed me how long a human body can go without sleeeeep.

However, I wouldn't have missed an evening with Jim for anything.

JAMES WARREN

The Warren Report



VAMPIRELLA
(Copyright
Warren Pub.,

Earlier in this issue, an attempt was made to convey, to a limited extent, the character of the participants of the "Econimics and the Comics" panel. Not the least of the characters, was one JAMES WARREN, whose fiery straightforwardness pervaded the convention. Now, here with another, in-depth look at Jim Warren, is con reporter Tom Fagan, with a character-study he calls---

"THE WARREN REPORT"

James Warren is a man who does what he likes to do. He likes monsters and horror, has since childhood, so he stated at the 1969 Comic Art Convention, and that's why he publishes Creepy and Eerie and now Vampirella.

Fantasy is Warren's bag and he has the drawstrings constantly open to pursue his first love and make a living for himself and others while at it. He constantly strives to improve his product. "I want to be good at what I'm doing and I do what I know best," he told a Convention audience.

Creepy and Eerie continue to grow along with Warren. They bid to become even better. Likewise, Warren had hopes aplenty for Vampirella. There'll be new people working on the magazines. One of them is to be Vaughn Bode, already famous in the Underground Comics coterie. Fans voiced approval when Warren said, "We'll get back as many of the old crew as possible too...but many have gone into new fields."

When asked about the chances for Sword and Sorcery tales, Warren replied, "Very slim." Why? He explained, S&S sagas are easier written than drawn. It's difficult to get an artist who can do a great job. And we can't ask Frank Frazetta to do everything!"

Asked whether he would ever again have a whole magazine devoted solely to Science Fiction, Warren shook his head with a "No, no, never, ever, never. The reason that while SiFi fans are notoriously vocal, they're not enough of them to make a publication really pay off", and Warren, reminded the audience a magazine has to make a profit to survive.

Neither will Warren magazines, at least in their present format, employ color on inside pages. Reasons for this are two-fold, said Warren, the first is that he feels an artist's expression is reproduced as faithfully as possible in black and white. The second is the higher costs that color naturally entails.

No punch was pulled, rather one was thrown when Warren was asked what he thought of Calvin Beck and "Castle of Frankenstein". Warren described Beck as the type of person who watches from the sidelines and seeing something succeed "jumps on the bandwagon."

Do the Warren magazines ever use stories other than staff commissioned ones? Bill Parente, senior editor, provided the answer with the statement, "We do accept unsolicited manuscripts," implying quite clearly the stories have to be of high quality. "We prefer stories already done in script form," continued Parente, and we like them usually around seven pages long and certainly no more than ten pages."

These questions, and Warren's explosive answers, tend to show just what kind of person James Warren is. He glories in controversy. It's his thing and he delights in doing it. Quick with a quip, deadly with a verbal barb and murder when he wants to make a point, Warren spares no one...sometimes not even himself. He also has another side to him. Beneath his saucy exterior, he's a likeable person who does his best to hide this fact.

In the past, Warren has publicly dennounced fandom..."Kids sticking their noses where they don't belong...a bunch of troublemakers who think they know more than experienced editors and publishers." Verbal lashes that stung; stung all the harder because James Warren always backed up what he had to say.

To listen to Warren rant (and at times he does just that) at past comicons, the casual observer could easily form the opinion that the publisher of Creepy, Eerie and Vampirella, had the knife out for fans and followers of comic books. Maybe he did. And maybe, just maybe, it was for the purpose of trying to awaken fans to the fact that comic books are a business, not just a matter of preferential tastes. Meaning, that if a publisher doesn't sell books, the fans aren't going to have books to buy.

James Warren is cockiness personified. He swaggers in his walk and his talk. He's scrappy. He minces not words and his words are likely as not to be as colorful as they are curt. He might tell you something is "none of your goddamn business" (when it isn't) and then just as quickly extend an assisting hand (when it's necessary). Jim Warren is just that kind of person.

He demonstrated all these qualities at the Warren Publishing Co. Awards Presentation. As Phil Seuling, Convention Director, told the fans Sunday afternoon, "When help was needed; it was freely given...by James Warren." With good-natured brashness, Warren returned Seuling's accolade, stating "I've been given a list of what words not to use." To the fans' amusement, he started to read from an imaginary list and then suddenly became serious in manner.

He was explaining about the "Warren Awards"...the first annual award to be presented at the 1969 Convention. Outlining the uphill history of Warren Publications, Warren declared many talented people worked hard when going was rough and pay was little. We could only pay one-third of what other publishers might offer, Warren related, but we could give our authors and artists "carte blanche to do what they wanted to do" in the medium of comic art.

To honor artists and authors, Warren said, is the purpose of the annual award. "We're proud of our people and we want to show it publicly." Warren credited his editor Bill Parente with the idea of establishing an annual award, the receipient to be chosen by a poll conducted in the Warren magazines.

"The award," declared Warren, "will be presented every year at the Comicon. I imagine," he smiled, "There will always be a Comicon. If there isn't; we will run one ourselves!" Cheers greeted this last thunderbolt statement. Cheers and applause!

Warren swiftly ran over a list of who could easily be named award winners. "Best story to Ray Bradbury; best art work to Frank Frazetta ('that would have to be best inside work; we can't give Frank best cover award, because he'd cop it every time'.); and best cover to Jack Davis."

It was time to name the actual winner and Warren played the moment to its fullest. A hushed sigh was evident as Warren brought a gleaming trophy of striking silver into view. The uncontrollable imp in Warren rose, as he set the beauty onto the podium and turned to his audience to mutter dryly, "Hmmm! It's a big mother!" And the fans agreed.

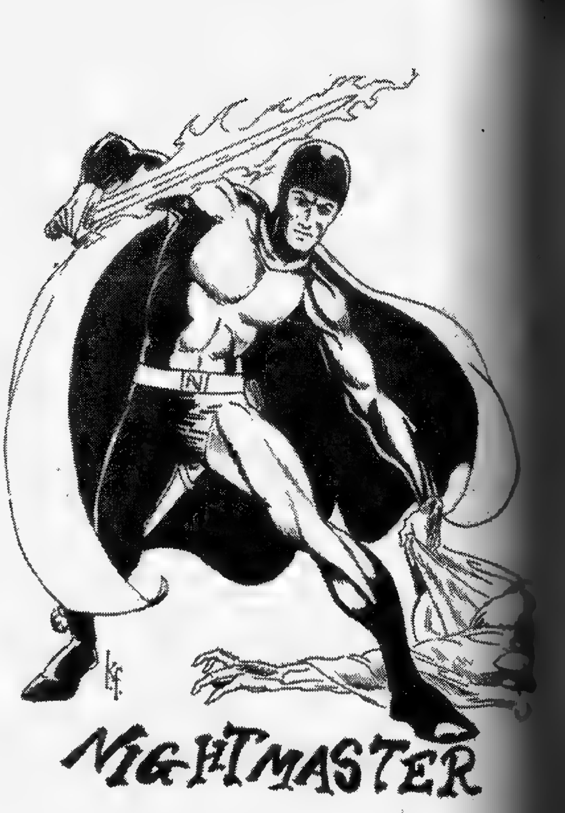
And the fans wildly agreed when Warren, serious once again, called Frank Frazetta to the center stage. They agreed with shouts, cheers, whistles, applause and stamping of feet as Frazetta came forward to accept the prize.

There was another surprise to broaden Frazetta's quiet smile. The award is to bear his name. Warren made it official, breaking into a grin of his own with:

"To Frank Frazetta to commemorate the Frazetta Award for outstanding illustration to be presented annually by Warren Publications." So read the trophy inscription.

So reads this...."The Warren Report!"

Thus, exit Jim Warren, controversial publisher, and enter Frank Frazetta, noted painter and illustrator. And as he enters, Tom Fagan is back once more, to present this..............



"Portrait of the Artist"

FRANK FRAZETTA - With the award presented him at the 1969 Comic Art Convention.

His first love is Comic Art!

So declared Frank Frazetta publicly to crowds gathered for Sunday's closing program of the 1969 Comic Art Convention. Frazetta's warm, friendly manner belied the fact the majority of fans there listened to his every word in almost worshipful awe...a well deserved awe for a talent the magnitude of Frazetta's.

"There's much more money in commercial art," Frazetta declared, "but I don't enjoy doing it." Asked the highest price he was ever paid for a commercial art assignment, Frazetta replied "about $8,000," for a movie poster he drew.

Frazetta mentioned he designed the posters used to advertise the film "The Night They Raided Minsky's." Fans applauded to demonstrate they knew he was the artist who had done the poster, and their appreciation of it. "I got paid for that poster, what I would have for doing 15 covers."

Though commercial art is lucrative, Frazetta told his listeners he has been in love with comic art since childhood. His first "comic strip" was:

"The Snowman...a character I created when I was about eight years old. I did little booklets about him, you know, and passed them around to the other kids." Years later, "The Snowman" was to appear in a bone-fide comic book. Frazetta, who had attended a School of Fine Arts when he was very young, made the acquaintance of John Giunta, who introduced him to the business aspect of comic books.

His first strip. The short-lived Snowman! But it was a beginning. "I was to meet artists like Dan Barry and Howie Post," related Frazetta. "Everybody was just getting started."

"I really got started when Graham Ingels saw my work. I've been working in comics ever since I was 16 years old," said Frazetta, then with a wry grin, giving his present age as 46, he added, "I look young, don't I!"

Frazetta mentioned his artistic career included working on a syndicated newspaper strip as well as creating one of his own. The latter was "Johnny Comet," and the former was Lil' Abner. Frazetta worked with Al Capp as an artist on the Abner strip for nine years, starting in 1953.

Asked his favorite artist, Frazetta replied without hesitation, "Hal Foster!" He praised pioneering artists such as Foster, saying, "There was a lot of great material around. I don't think the younger fans of today really appreciate it, though."

That Frazetta enjoyed and enjoys doing covers for the James Warren Publications of Eerie and Creepy and now Vampirella, was evident by his own statements and the friendly exchange of conversation between himself and Warren when the publisher joined him on the speaker's stage.

A fan asked Warren point-blank what he paid Frazetta for doing a cover. Warren, typically replied, just as point-blank, "A LOT!" Frazetta laughed; then Warren said seriously:

"We don't pay Frank enough commensurate with his ability. If we paid him $100,000 a cover, it still wouldn't be enough. A man with Frank's ability is a rarity. They come along only every so often!"

This brought appreciative response from the audience.

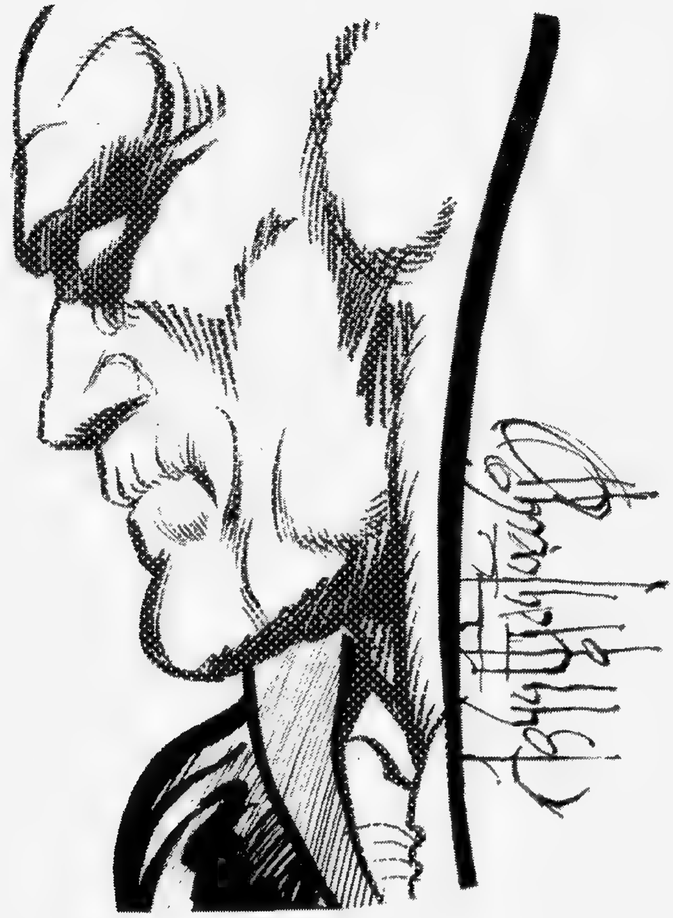
One fan raised his hand and asked, "Mr. Frazetta, sir, It's been said you create women better than god. How do you manage to accomplish this?"

"Are you mad, man?" Frank shot back. "Look around you. Inspiration is everywhere!" Then, more seriously, he explained that he often uses his wife and daughter as models.

In conclusion, Frazetta said, "I like to do single drawings. I get wrapped up in them." SO DOESN'T FANDOM!

Max Gottfried 69

A SALUTE TO



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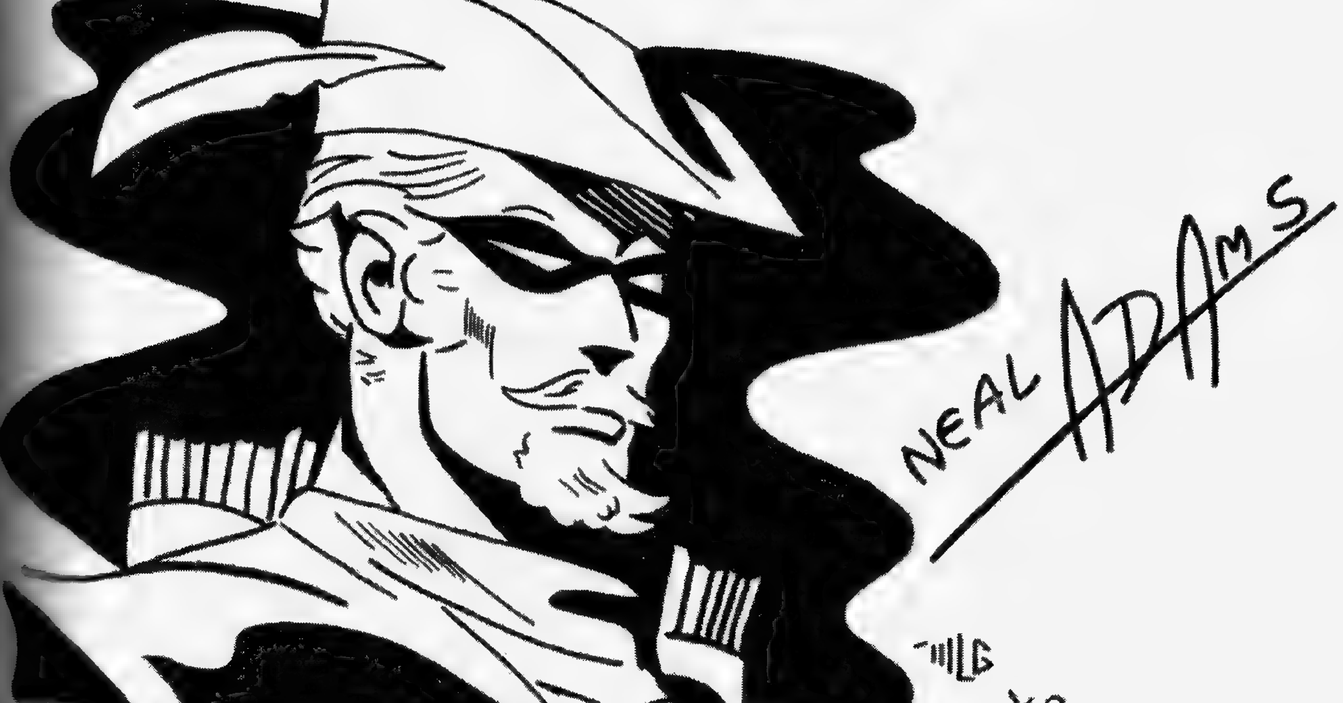
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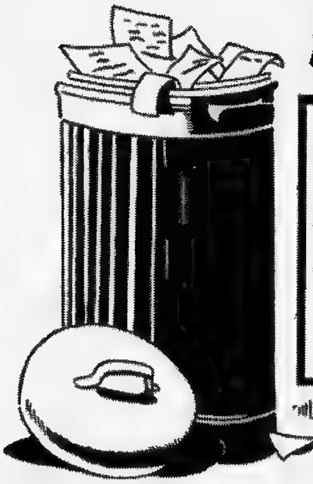
MLG '69



From the Circular File

Alright fans! Here's your chance to boost or knock COMIC CRUSADER. Each issue, I'll print the most intelligent letters I receive.

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MARTIN L. GREIM
BOX 132
DEDHAM, MASS.
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ERIC BLACKMORE
644 9th Ave
New York, N.Y. 10036

Today I recieved another Comic Crusader through the mail. The cover: Wow! Fantucchio is really talented! I must say it was the most superbly illustrated book cover I've ever seen! That drawing of Sif, by Gary Kato, is very realistic, as was the well-drawn Dare-Devil by Fujitake. By the way, my brother thinks he's the greatest and who's to argue? Can you give me a hint of who the Viper is? Tom Fagan's article was better than last issue's (and that's kind of hard to top.) Your drawings throughout the magazine are just too fantastic. I just can't wait to see The Defender again. The article on Joe Orlando was great, as was Cosgrove's and your art. It held my interest easily. Donna's Doodle's was great, and you had better let her draw more for your fanzine. Mongo Mania and the Green Lantern articles were good, but the full page Green Lantern done by Steranko caught my eye first. Fandom's Finest article was so good it inspired me to subscribe to Bob Cosgrove's fanzine "Champion". I found Mr. A. by Steve Ditko good, but it took me a while to get the full meaning. History's Heroes was interesting, and the art...beautiful. But the best thing about your zine is the loads of info you give us in Comic Chatter. Whoever did that Spider-Man drawing made it look like Ditko's Spidey. The back cover was fantastic, but when I first saw it, I thought it was the new Catwoman. Your's is the first fanzine I ever bought, and I certainly picked a winer!

GLAD YOU ENJOYED ISSUE 6. DENNIS FUJITAKE IS A GREAT ARTIST. THE VIPER IS AN AMA-HEROINE CREATED BY RONN FOSS. JUST A POINT ON THE ORLANDO ARTICLE - THAT WAS JUST MY ART. BOB AND I WROTE IT TOGETHER THOUGH. THE SPIDERMAN ART WAS DONE BY KEITH FUJUMITSU AND OF ALL THE ART IN THE ISSUE, IT GOT THE MOST COMMENT. I THINK THE NEW CATWOMAN'S COSTUME WAS REFERANCED FROM THE GOLDEN AGE HEROINE BLACK CAT'S COSTUME.

DAVID THOMAS
RFD 2, Rudy Road
Dowagiac, Mich. 49047

I'm sending this letter of comment to you concerning Comic Crusader #6. First off, I'd say that C.C. isn't long enough or often enough. I think it would be better to have 25 to 30 pages and to print bi-monthly if possible. A price of 50 cents would be reasonable for such a mag of C.C.'s quality.

I really enjoyed the Joe Orlando article and I hope that articles like this and Donna's Doodles continue to be used. How about Dennis Fujitake taking the ama-contributor spot in the next issue?

This may sound a little unusual, but could you print more group pictures, especially of the JSA? I'd like to see some really good, full page size illos of the JSA, JLA, Avengers, and also the Legion of Super-Heroes. You could take the best and color them, then make prints of them on heavy paper or posterboard and sell them - making many fans happy and you some spending money.

Where does Bob Cosgrove get his material? The Seven Soldiers of Victory article was the greatest. There is only one thing though. He shouldn't mix a report on the story and an article on the 7 Soldiers together. This is hard to explain but if you read this particular article, you can see what I'm getting at. Otherwise, it is the best I've seen in quite a while.

Another point is that Comic Chatter isn't long enough. I'd like to see it about 2 pages long with spot illos to fill in the excess space.

One more thing, could you start a new article...maybe called "Spot-Light On---"? This would be an article on heroes, new mags, zines, and some pros. Their name would be in the blank.

I CAN'T PUBLISH "CRUSADER" ANY MORE THAN 4TIMES A YEAR. I WORK FOR A LIVING AND THIS IS JUST A HOBBY. I DON'T WANT TO RAISE MY PRICE OR PAGE COUNT DUE TO LACK OF TIME AND 35¢ IS A PRICE MOST FANS CAN PAY. GROUP SHOTS - MAYBE, BUT NOT IN COLOR OR SOLD SEPERATLY. THE COST WOULD BE TOO HIGH AND I WOULDN'T HAVE ANY SPENDING MONEY. BOTH BOB AND I HAVE FAIRLY LARGE COMIC COLLECTIONS AND DO TREMENDOUS AMOUNTS OF RESEARCH ON OUR ARTICLES. I RE-READ 7 SOLDIERS AND I STILL DON'T SEE WHAT YOU MEAN. NEITHER DOES BOB. COMIC CHATTER IS LONG ENOUGH TO SUIT ME. I TAKE QUITE A BIT OF TIME TO LOOK UP AND PUT IT TOGETHER. "SPOT-LIGHT ON---" SOUNDS LIKE ALL THE ARTICLES IN "CRUSADER" PUT IN ONE. WHY BOTHER?

GLENN BAKER
2065 Rock Springs Road
Decatur, Ill. 62521

Issue number 6 of the Comic Crusader, though a little bit late, was one of the better issues you have presented us with yet. (That's sure to win some points!) The third installment on the Airboy article was okay, if you like that type of hero-yarn which I don't happen to, but chalk that up for freedom of choice. I won't go into detail and tell what I didn't like about it, because I realize that there are those that will like the article and I will not belittle them for it--that is their choice and opinion and I won't deprive them of it. (Besides this is a no-opinion zine anyway, remember?) (DAMN BIG OF YOU, GLENN. - MLG.)

The article on Joe Orlando was appreciated greatly and he was a man I knew little about, so you know that I enjoyed it also.

I thought the article about Donna's Doodles was informing. It's things like this that keep me coming back to C.C. She is truly fandoms more talented female artist. And I agree with you wholeheartedly that her work is hardly doodling.

The GL article was kinda mediocre compared to some of the other stuff in the fanzine (the Mr. A. strip for instance) but Steranko's full page spread made up for it. It was truly great. (Which is typical of Steranko.)

As for Steve Ditko's Mr. A. strip--I'll let some other LOC writer tell you how great it was because I simply can not find words to express myself. Maybe, someone else can. But I do want to add that the thing that sold me on the story was the realism and emotions portrayed. Steve is a master of both, but, as I said the character's realism is what sold me.

Keep the History's Heroes and the Comic Chatter columns going strong, because I find them very informative.

Ya know, Marty, I never was able to stomach Flash Gordon. But now I find the first thing I turn to, when I recieve my CC thru the mail, is the Flash Gordon column. Keep going like this and you'll have a convert yet.

All in all, it was a good issue. Not great, but still a very good issue.

"CRUSADER" WAS LATE LAST ISSUE, DUE TO PRINTING PROBLEMS AND THE AMOUNT OF TIME IT TOOK TO PUT IT TOGETHER. I DON'T JUST KNOCK THIS OFF, YOU KNOW. IT'S TOO BAD YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE A GOOD THING WHEN YOU SEE IT. TOM'S AIRBOY ARTICLE WAS ONE OF THE BEST ARTICLES I'VE EVER HAD THE PLEASURE OF READING. NEVER A FLASH GORDON FAN? TOO BAD! TAKE A LOOK AT ALEX RAYMOND'S WORK SOMETIME. IT MAKES MINE LOOK LIKE DOODLES.

25¢ The Collector
— editor —

BILL WILSON 1535 ONEIDA DRIVE
CLAIRTON PENNSYLVANIA 15025

Now on Sale! Issue # 16 Con issue. The highlight of this issue is a report of the 1969 Comic Art Convention, with sketches from some of comicdom's top pros. Such as Neal Adams, Jim Steranko, Bill Everett, Dick Giordano, Ernie Colon. Also in this issue: A Hyperman strip by Bill Wilson.

LONNIE THOMPSON
P.O. Box 129
Iron Gate, Va. 24448

Comic Crusader #6 was very good. After reading all three Airboy articles, I feel that I know him as well as if I had read most of his original stories. I hope that Mr. Fagan does some articles on other heroes in a future issue of CC, just as thoroughly.

The article on Joe Orlando was great, but seemed too short, too bad you didn't do it sort of like the one on Gar Fox in #5.

The interview with Donna Astin seemed too short too. Why not ask your readers to submit the names of fans they want interviewed, and include some of the questions they would like asked.

"Mongo Mania" wasn't as good as previous ones, but still of interest to Flash Gordon fans.

I didn't think much of the article on GL until I realized it was only about his adventures with the JSA. You must have had a hard time keeping from getting carried away. What adjective can you think of that hasn't been used to describe a Steranko drawing at least 100 times? So I look in the Ape-English dictionary and say "ben" or to us great.

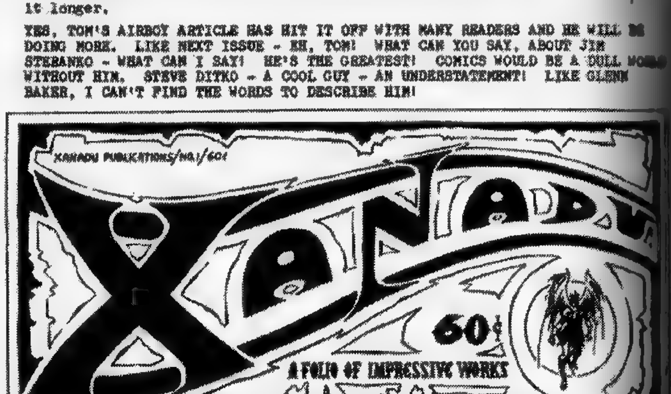
Mr. Cosgrove's "Fandom's Finest" was in my opinion, his best yet. I would also like to see The Eclipse in CC.

Mr. A. seemed like it should be in a comic mag instead of a fanzine. Steve Ditko must be a pretty cool guy to let you use it, can't wait for part two.

Ever since I read an article by Mark Hanerfeld about the 7 Soldiers of Victory, in a recent comic, I've wanted to know more about them, and you came through. Mr. Cosgrove did another great article.

You could start a new fanzine with "Comic Chatter", or at least make it longer.

YES, TOM'S AIRBOY ARTICLE HAS HIT IT OFF WITH MANY READERS AND HE WILL BE DOING MORE. LIKE NEXT ISSUE - EH, TOM! WHAT CAN YOU SAY, ABOUT JIM STERANKO - WHAT CAN I SAY! HE'S THE GREATEST! COMICS WOULD BE A DULL WORLD WITHOUT HIM. STEVE DITKO - A COOL GUY - AN UNDERSTATEMENT! LIKE GLENN BAKER, I CAN'T FIND THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE HIM!



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I just recieved CC#6 today, and it was great. I see that you've now reached your "perfection" point, and staying there very nicely. #3 was great, #4 very good, #5 perfect, and #6 perfect also, so, as I said, you've reached the perfection point. And I'm sincere when I say that I'm sorry there are none of #1 and #2 left. Darn it!

The cover by Fantucchio was a good one, and fitted the rest of the issue well. I like the "mirror" technique he used on shading the fallen Airboy.

CRUSADER COMMENTS, I suppose, always has to thank the contributors, naturally, where would any zine be without them, but don't carry it too far. Each issue seems to say the same thing, #5's especially. Try to opinionize [illegible] what there instead. It will bring you closer to your readers.

Tom Fagan's article I disliked a little, for it seems as if once you've read one you've read them all. He does use too much description, but once you get going, you get interested fairly well. As always, your art was great.

CC to DC on Joe Orlando was excellent. That is just what a zine needs, not re-hash's. Altho I myself wouldn't know how to go about getting the information you gave, you evidentally did. How? Your friends in [illegible] help out? Next let's see Infantino or Giordano. And while on the subject of biographies, I liked the info on Astin. Why not do one on yourself! How you got into fandom, your collection, your charming wife, etc.

Steranko had a fine drawing there, too. Be proud of it, and that you are so lucky to have Jim as a contributor. (JIM'S NOT A CONTRIBUTOR. HE'S A FRIEND AND A DAMN GOOD ONE TOO! - MLG.) And (grrr) you get to keep all those little gems! You must have your whole house wall-papered with Steranko originals by now.

Ahhh...Mr. A...the highlight of the issue! I enjoyed it immensely and got hold of the message. I noticed that nearly all of his characters looked like the same Hawk and Dove or Spider characters.

About your letters section...I know it's pretty hard to not print letters when that's all you get, but page after page of it does get boring. [illegible] you are interested in what the readers have to say about it, for it's your zine. However, the readers could care less, and would rather hear opinions of people which are always interesting.

In closing, I hope I'm here for #50. Keep it up, Martin. You have one of, if not the TOP article zine, in the whole of fandom.

[illegible] DESCRIPTION IN TOM'S ARTICLES - I CAN'T GO ALONG WITH THAT! WHO WANTS TO READ SOMETHING THAT ISN'T WELL DESCRIBED. THAT'S THE MAKING OF A GOOD ARTICLE. BOTH BOB AND I PUT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME INTO RESEARCH - THAT'S HOW WE GET THE INFO ON PROS. IN FACT WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON ONE [illegible], WITH STEVE FRITZ (to be released after the first of the year) FOR OVER A YEAR. MY BIOGRAPHY WAS IN ISSUE #1. HOWEVER, IF YOU'RE REAL HOT FOR [illegible] A FANZINE CALLED "THE COLLECTOR'S CHRONICLE" (#2) HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH ME, ALONG WITH A DEFENDER ILLO. IT'S 50¢ AND CAN BE PURCHASED FROM: WILLIAM LUND, 1723 W. SPOFFORD, SPOKANE, WASH. 99205. AS FOR MY HOUSE BEING WALL-PAPERED WITH STERANKO ORIGINALS - NO, NOT REALLY. HOWEVER, I APPRECIATE GOOD ART AND JIM'S IS THE BEST. I HAVE HIS WORK HUNG IN MY LIVINGROOM AND WOULDN'T TRADE IT FOR A REMBRANDT.

ED FISHER
510 W. Marion St.
Monticello, Ind. 47960

I enjoyed Comic Crusader #6 very much. Unfortunately, my opinion of your cover is not a very good one. Please keep your covers decent! I believe you don't judge a book by its cover, but I also think comic fandom should uphold a decent image or it is lost!

(SORRY JOHN! I JUST HAD TO PRINT THIS ONE!)
AS THE LEGION OF DECENCY MARCHES ON MY FAVORITE COVER ARTIST - LET ME SAY THIS: JOHN FANTUCCHIO'S COVER WAS IN THE SPIRIT OF THE AIRBOY STORY FROM WHICH IT WAS ADAPTED. MANY GOLDEN AGE STORIES WERE DEPICTED IN THIS MANNER AND JOHN TOLD IT LIKE IT WAS. HIS COVER WAS FAR FROM INDECENT, BUT RATHER A WELL DRAWN INTERPRETATION.

CRAIG BATTNER
516 Cedar Ave
Moose Lake, Minn. 55767

About five days after RB-CC came out, I ordered your Comic Crusader #6. I waited quite a length of time, and on Aug. 2nd I wrote to you again informing you that I did not get my copy. well, I still have not received it. Please check up on it, and send me my issue quickly. If you do not plan to, please refund my 35 cents. I do not wish to wait much longer for it, so either send my copy or refund my money. Too many times have I been rooked on ordering fanzines to let it happen once more. Thanks!

RATS! CAUGHT IN THE ACT! I WAS PLANNING TO RUN OFF TO MEXICO WITH YOUR 35¢ TOO! IN ALL FAIRNESS TO CRAIG, I DID GET A NOTE, THE NEXT DAY, APOLOGIZING FOR THE ABOVE. (He received "Crusader" in his next mail.) HOWEVER, HIS NOTE IS TYPICAL OF A FEW FANS WHO DON'T GET AN ORDERED ZINE RIGHT AWAY. AS I EXPLAINED EARLIER, ISSUE #6 WAS LATE. IN FACT THIS ISSUE IS LATE. IT TAKES QUITE A BIT OF TIME TO PUT "CRUSADER" OUT - SO PLEASE BE PATIENT! I MAY BE 6 MONTHS LATE, BUT I WILL GET THIS PUBLICATION TO YOU!

F.L. WATKINS
Box 110
Mason City, Ill. 62664

I have always maintained that CC is the best zine around, and issue 6 certainly lived up to my estimation. In fact, I have never seen an article or illo that I haven't liked, in it. I hope sincerely that you will continue to publish it for a long, long time.

The cover was fairly good, but quite frankly, I've seen Mr. Fantucchio do much better. It was too normal and conservative. John is best suited for way-out type illos. On the inside, the Sif illo was magnificent. Jack Kirby could hardly done better.

The Airboy article was informative and interesting. The illustrations were just as excellent...you're getting better, at a steady pace.

The Joe Orlando article was also good. I enjoy biographical sketches of pros, so I enjoyed this one; even though Mr. Orlando is not one of my favorites. How about putting Neal Adams (the best) in the PRO spot? The spot on Donna Astin was equally good, if not better. I feel that more zines should have that kind of article, in order to draw fandom closer together. I may be ignorant, but who is Hobor?

Since Flash Gordon has always been one of my favorites, Mongo Mania is always a source of enjoyment to me. However, you might have added to the KANG article, that Kang was last seen in the first Flash Gordon book published by Charlton. Speaking of Charlton's Flash Gordon - what do you think of their current series of books, drawn by Pat Boyette? I, for one, think that they are a new low for the Flash Gordon history. Mr. Boyette is better fitted for one-shot sci-fi stories or strips he has originated.

The Green Lantern article was fair, but it seemed like a rehash of a Fact File in some DC comics. Ditto for the Seven Soldiers of Victory. However, the artwork was magnificent. Steranko caught the spirit of GL; Steve Fritz is becoming almost as a distinctive an artist as Fantucchio.

Fandom's Finest was interesting. The Black Cat back cover was excellent. I'm saving the best for last. Mr. A. by Steve Ditko was wonderful. I have never seen a more adult attitude to a comic strip. Why doesn't Mr. Ditko try to upgrade the comic scene by selling, renting or leasing Mr. A. to a pro company? It is truly the best creation of his illustrious career.

IF STEVE LETS MR. A. GO TO A PRO COMPANY, IT WOULD NO LONGER BE HIS PROPERTY AND STEVE WANTS TO KEEP MR. A. IN HIS NAME. I'M A PURIST - I LIKE RAYMOND'S OR WILLIAMSON'S WORK ON FLASH GORDON. THE ONLY TWO OTHER ARTISTS WHO ARE NEAR THEM ARE...MAC RABOY AND AUSTIN BRIGGS.

Issue NO. 7 of
CHAMPION

Featuring

"THE DICK GIORDANO STORY"
An in depth look at this great artist - editor.

Plus: A tremendous TOM FAGAN fiction piece.
Art by..Fantucchio, Fritz, Kowalik, Black, Bradford, and Cosgrove & Greim.

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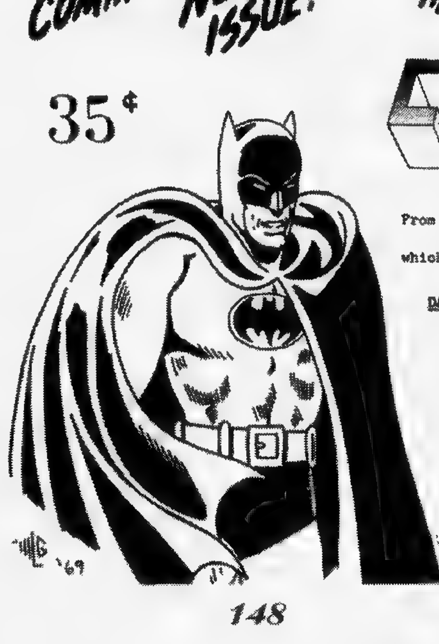

The COMIC CRUSADER NO. 8

SOMETHING SPECIAL

From Rutland, Vermont - THE BATMAN HALLOWEEN PARADE.

There will be a report, with photo's, of this event; in which many comic pros will attend. DON'T MISS IT!

Also

DAN ADKINS - A biography of this tremendous talent, by Cosgrove & Greim. Plus: an interview and art by Dan.

Fantastic Art By:

Steve Ditko, Steve Fritz, Wendy Fletcher, William Black, Anthony Kowalik, Dennis Fujitake, Bob Cosgrove, M.L.G. and work by the writer's writer...TOM FAGAN.

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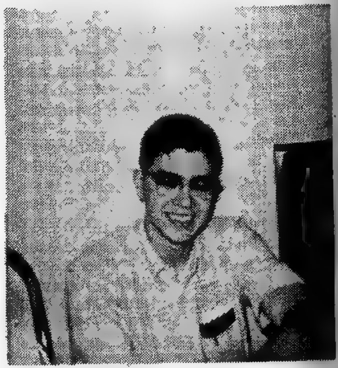
CON-69
DETROIT

Reporter
STEVE FRITZ


Steve Fritz

I first arrived in Detroit, the Friday before the Con began (June 7 - 8) so I could get settled at the Buckler's house, where I was staying. This, of course, was for me, as much a part of the Con as the Con itself. Rich Buckler is no mean artist himself (he's working on a strip for National) and has managed to amass some fantastic pieces of original art - Kubert, Infantino, Adams, Giordano, Anderson, etc.

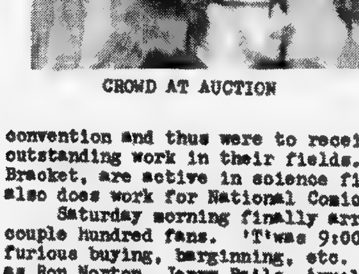
Rich and I went up to downtown Detroit to the 16-story Howard Johnson motor lodge, where the con was to be held on the second floor, Friday night, so we could hang some original art. (Kubert, Kirby, Infantino, Adams, etc.) The art came from both Rich's collection and some shipments from National and Galaxy, that had been sent for the Con. (This is a science fiction and movie con also.) As I hung the art, Rich talked with some other fans. Then Al Williamson walked in, and I paused in my work so we could both talk to him. Al, along with Edmond Hamilton and Leigh Brackett, were the guests of honor at the convention and thus were to receive the Nova Award for outstanding work in their fields. Hamilton and Miss Bracket, are active in science fiction and cinima. Ed also does work for National Comics.

CROWD AT AUCTION

Saturday morning finally arrived, along with a couple hundred fans. 'T'was 9:00. After all sorts of furious buying, barginning, etc. and meeting fans, such as Ron Norton, Jerry Bails, Arwel Jones, and too many others to mention, it was 11:00 and the movie the "Big Sleep", written by Leigh Brackett, came on. It starred Bogart and was really a top notch mystery.

Next, on the agenda, was a pannel discussion "Effects of Comic Art," with Jerry Bails, Gene Seger, Ed Aprill, Rich and a couple of others. Suffice it to say they came up with some mind staggering, world shaking, etc. effects of comic art.

Naturally, the discussion went over time, so the movie, Bela Lugosi's "Chandu on the Magic Isle," was delayed 'till later that night. Everybody wanted the auction of original material to go off as scheduled - so that's what happened! Original work by Gaughn, Adkins, Reese, Bode, and some of the pulp artists were auctioned off (along with a Richard Buckler and 'AHEM' a Steve Fritz - pic that is). Everybody bidded, but they all held back for the best to come tomorrow an original daily Al Williamson X-9 would be auctioned off!!


AL WILLIAMSON WINS
NOVA AWARD!

But first -- the banquet, where Leigh Brackett, husband Ed Hamilton, and Al Williamson, recieved their Nova Awards. And let me tell you - the Nova Award plaque is absolutely beautiful. It's a shield shaped piece of very handsome walnut or perhaps mahogany, about a foot in height. The Nova emblem is placed near the top, over an inscription telling the purpose of the award. But the crowning touch is the engraved portrait of each respective winner on a gold or silver 5" square. Al Williamson's was a selfportrait that Jack Promo, who drew the other two, managed to weedle out of Al. (I might mention that Jack Promo is a very accomplished commercial artist himself. He more or less engineered the plaques.

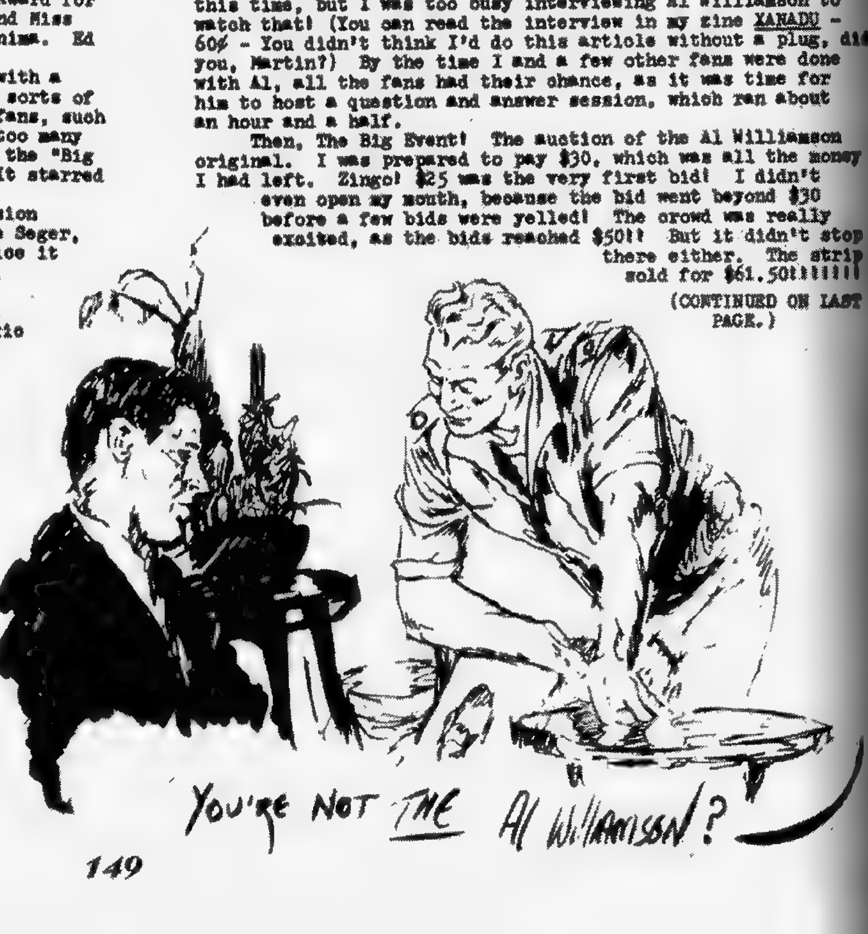
ORIGINAL ART DISPLAY

After the successful banquet, everyone returned to trading, while the banquet area was cleared to show more movies. And so, that evening, until two o'clock in the morning, we thrilled to "Chandu on the Magic Isle" (a movie version of the serial where everybody but Chandu performed magic!), Golem (an ancient silent classic) and Rocket Ship (a movie version of the first Flash Gordon serial - although ancient, it too was really exciting!)

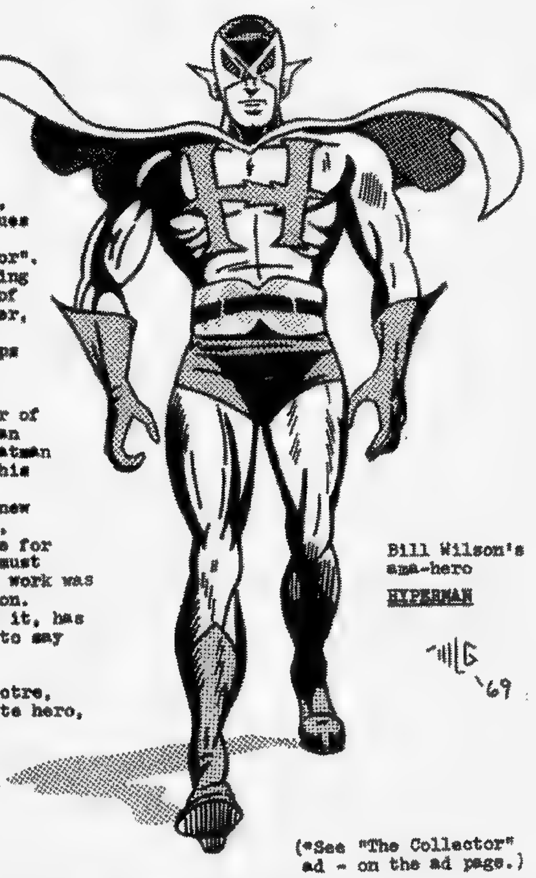
Sunday began much as Saturday had - more buying! I believe they also showed a movie (The Face of Fu Manchu) around this time, but I was too busy interviewing Al Williamson to watch that! (You can read the interview in my zine XANADU - 60¢ - You didn't think I'd do this article without a plug, did you, Martin?) By the time I and a few other fans were done with Al, all the fans had their chance, as it was time for him to host a question and answer session, which ran about an hour and a half.

Then, The Big Event! The auction of the Al Williamson original. I was prepared to pay $30, which was all the money I had left. Zingo! $25 was the very first bid! I didn't even open my mouth, because the bid went beyond $30 before a few bids were yelled! The crowd was really excited, as the bids reached $50!! But it didn't stop there either. The strip sold for $61.50!!!!!!

(CONTINUED ON LAST PAGE.)


YOU'RE NOT THE Al Williamson?

"THE COLLECTOR'S" COLLECTOR



Bill Wilson's
ama-hero
HYPERMAN

It has been asked, by some cynic, "Why is BILL WILSON considered great, when all he writes in "The Collector" is the editorial?" Well, in this issues amateur CONtributor spot, I'll tell you why.

Bill Wilson is a young fan who publishes a fanzine called "The Collector". He is perhaps not the greatest artist in the world, but he is GREAT at putting together and editing a fanzine. It is this talent that puts him way ahead of the many "crud" zines that flood the fan market today. Bill has put together, a good readable fanzine, with many top fans as contributors. Through his keen imagination and effort, he has placed his publication as one of the tops in fandom. The Comic Crusader is proud to interview BILL WILSON.

Q: How did you get into fandom?

A: Well, I believe I first entered fandom when I read of Biljo White, editor of Batmania, in an issue of Batman. This was about late 1965. I had been an avid comic collector for as long as I could remember, and I was also a Batman fan. So I decided to write Biljo to find out more about what he called his "fanzine" Batmania. I ordered them and began to contribute to them. Batmania was the only zine which printed my material. At this time, I knew about 30 fans, which I thought was the world! I continued to correspond, write, and draw until about July of 1967, when I decided that it was time for me to make my contribution to fandom, in the form of my own fanzine. I must honestly say that it was the greatest to me, but when I realized that my work was nothing compared to other fan endeavors, I set out to remedy the situation. With the help of other fans I knew, and then pros, "TC", as I knicknamed it, has grown to be, what I think, is a pretty darn good fanzine; and I'm proud to say that it's my publication.

Q: What's your favorite comic book and hero?

A: Some of my favorites, old and new are All Star, Batman, the EC line, Spectre, More Fun, Spiderman, Tarzan and hundreds of others. As far as my favorite hero, I'm inclined to say Flash Gordon. He's one of the most fantastic and original heroes to come from an artists pen.

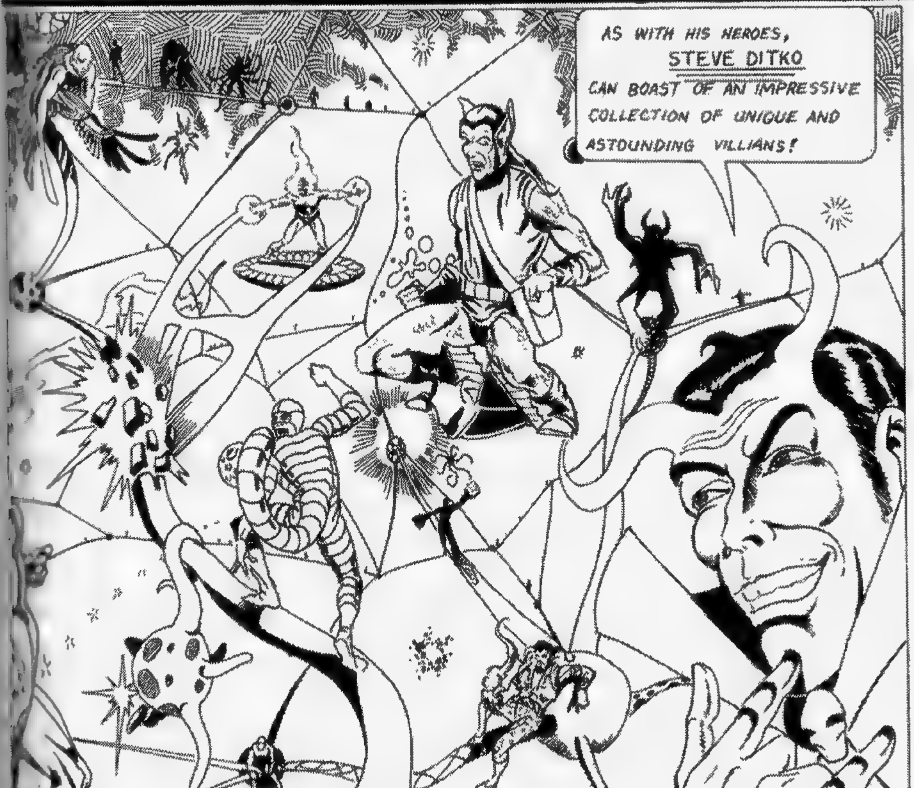
Q: Favorite artist.

A: Fan artist, John Fantucchio. His commercial art, for various establishments, is utterly gorgeous. Pro artists, the two I most admire are Alex Raymond and Frank Frazetta.

Q: Favorite ama-hero.

A: The Human Cat by "Grass" Green. I'm impressed by its originality and interesting script, and even greater artwork.

(*See "The Collector" ad - on the ad page.)


AS WITH HIS HEROES, STEVE DITKO CAN BOAST OF AN IMPRESSIVE COLLECTION OF UNIQUE AND ASTOUNDING VILLIANS!
DF

DENNIS FUJITAKE, our Hawaiian staff artist, is one of STEVE DITKO's bigest fans. So what better artist could I find to introduce Part 2 of this issues strip on....

Mr.A.

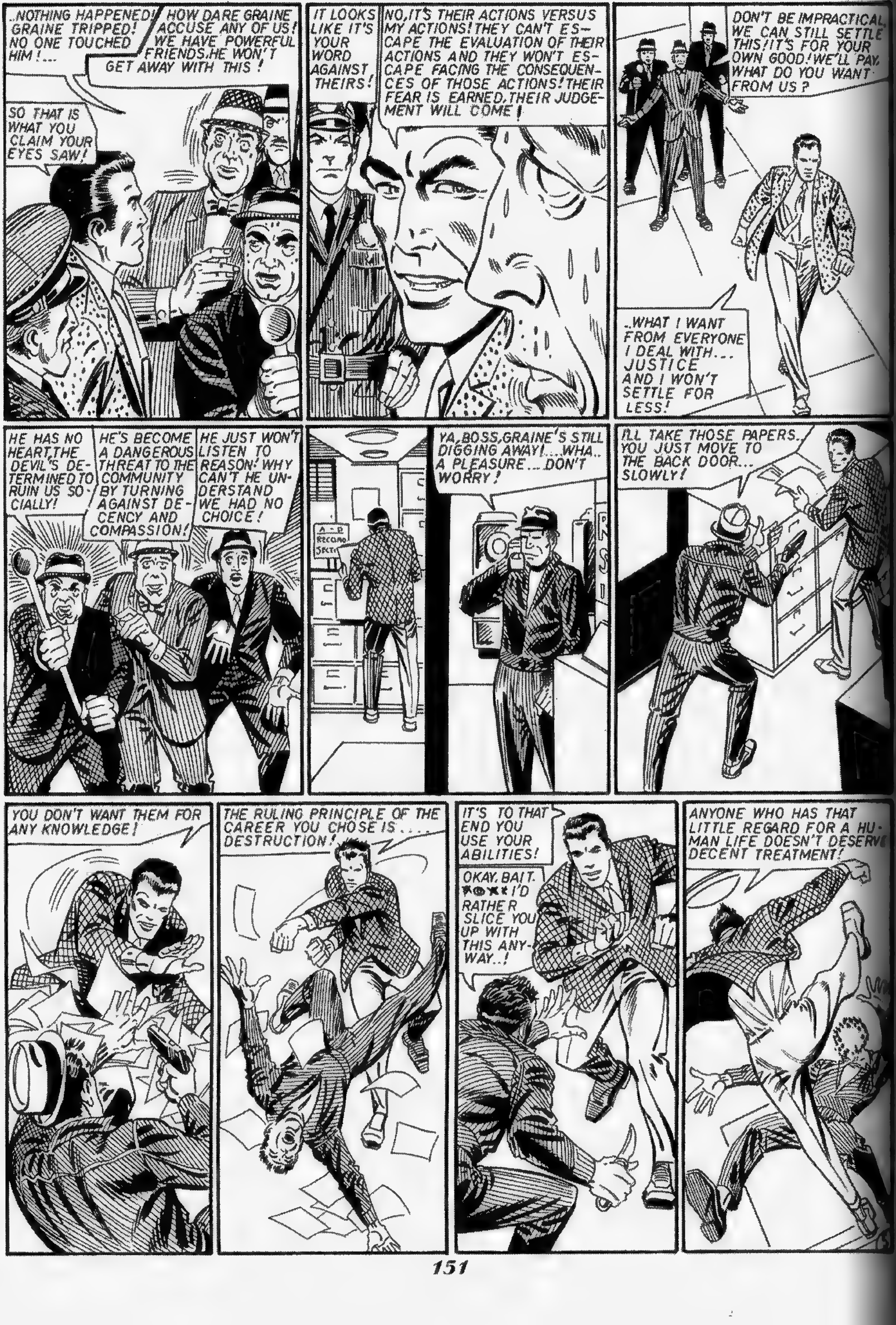
by Ditko

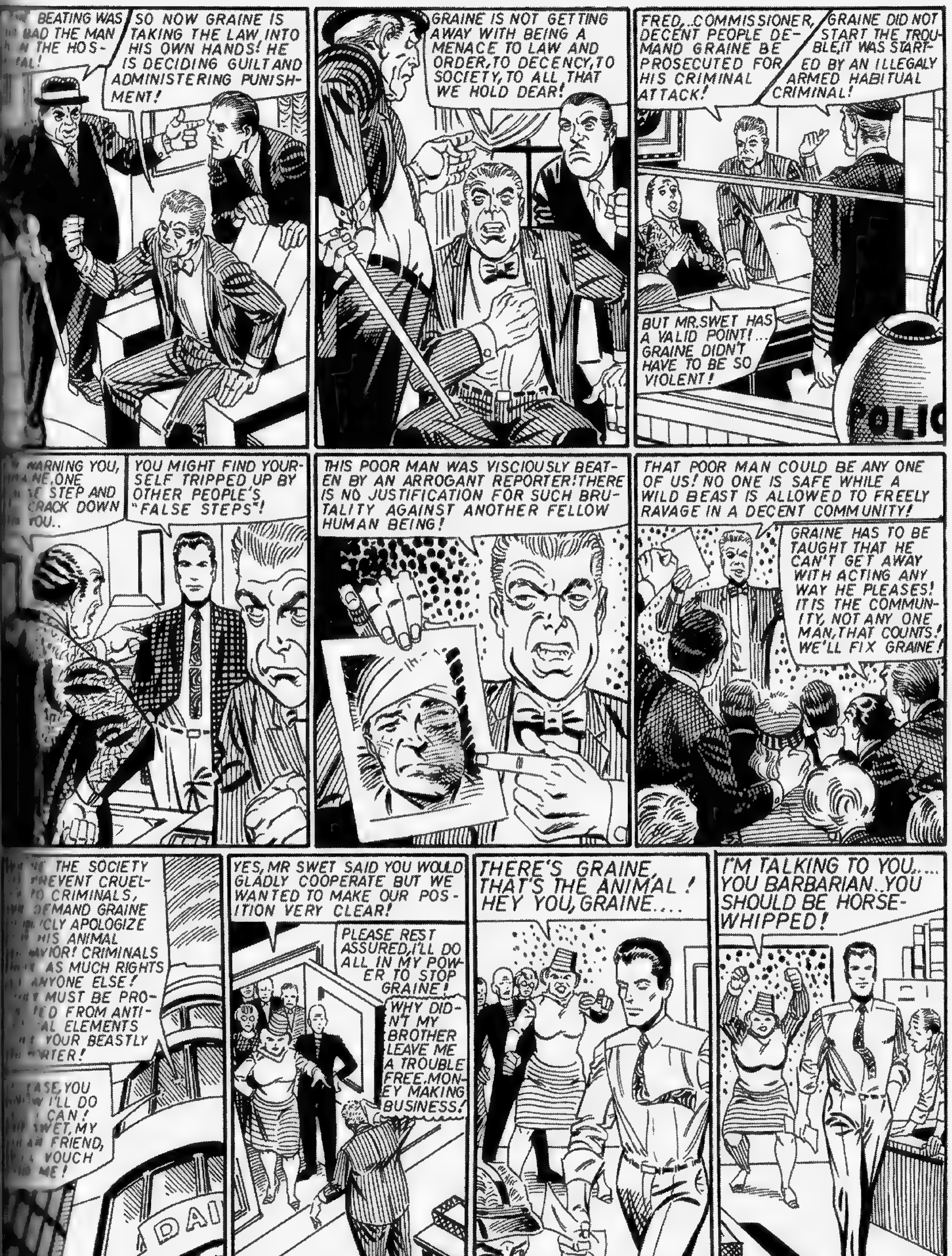
SUMMARY

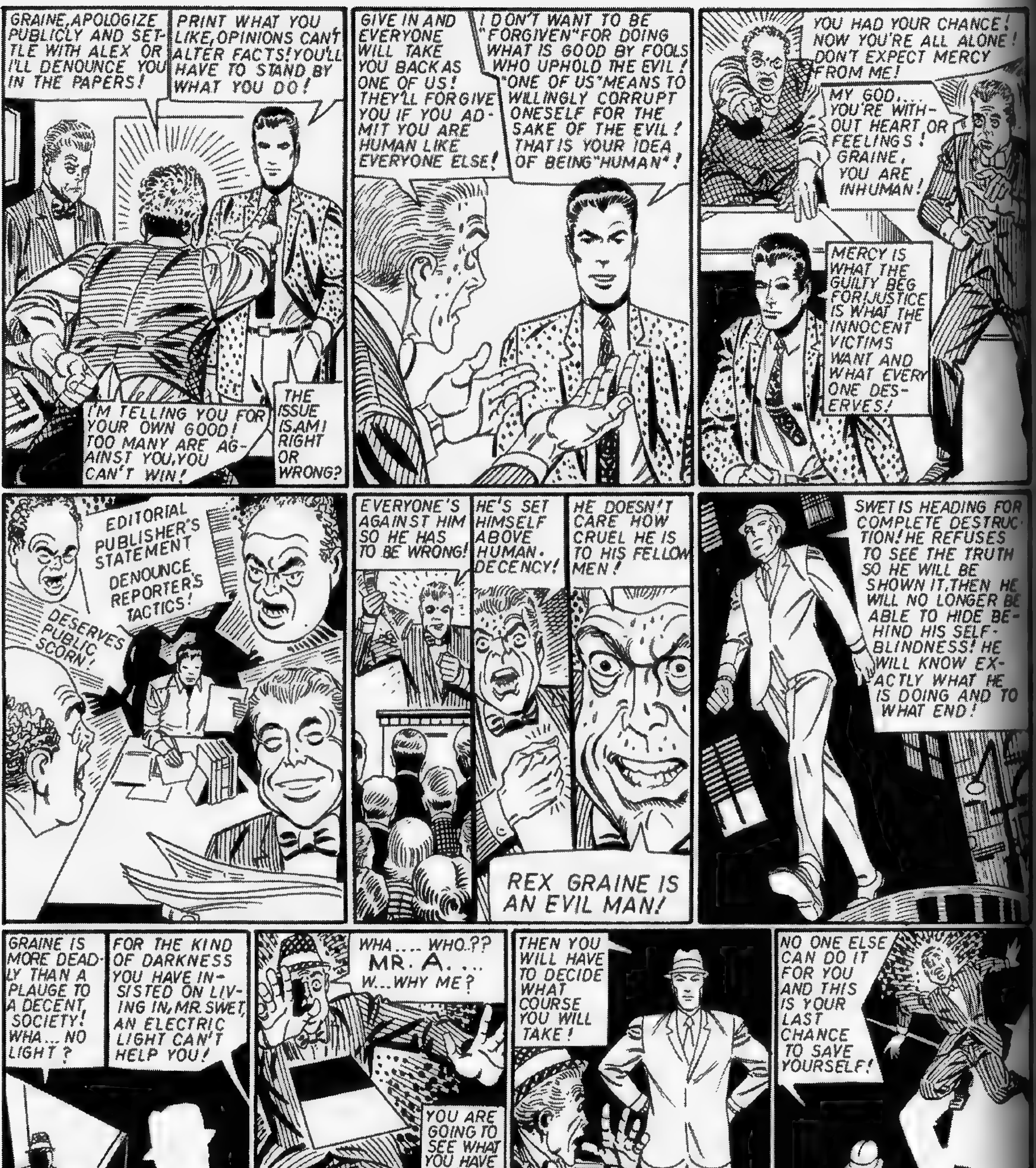
When three of the community's leading citizens approach reporter Rex Graine for the purpose of investigating crime in the city, he readily agrees. For their part, the citizens agree that justice rules the findings, and that everyone is treated according to the facts uncovered, with no evasions.

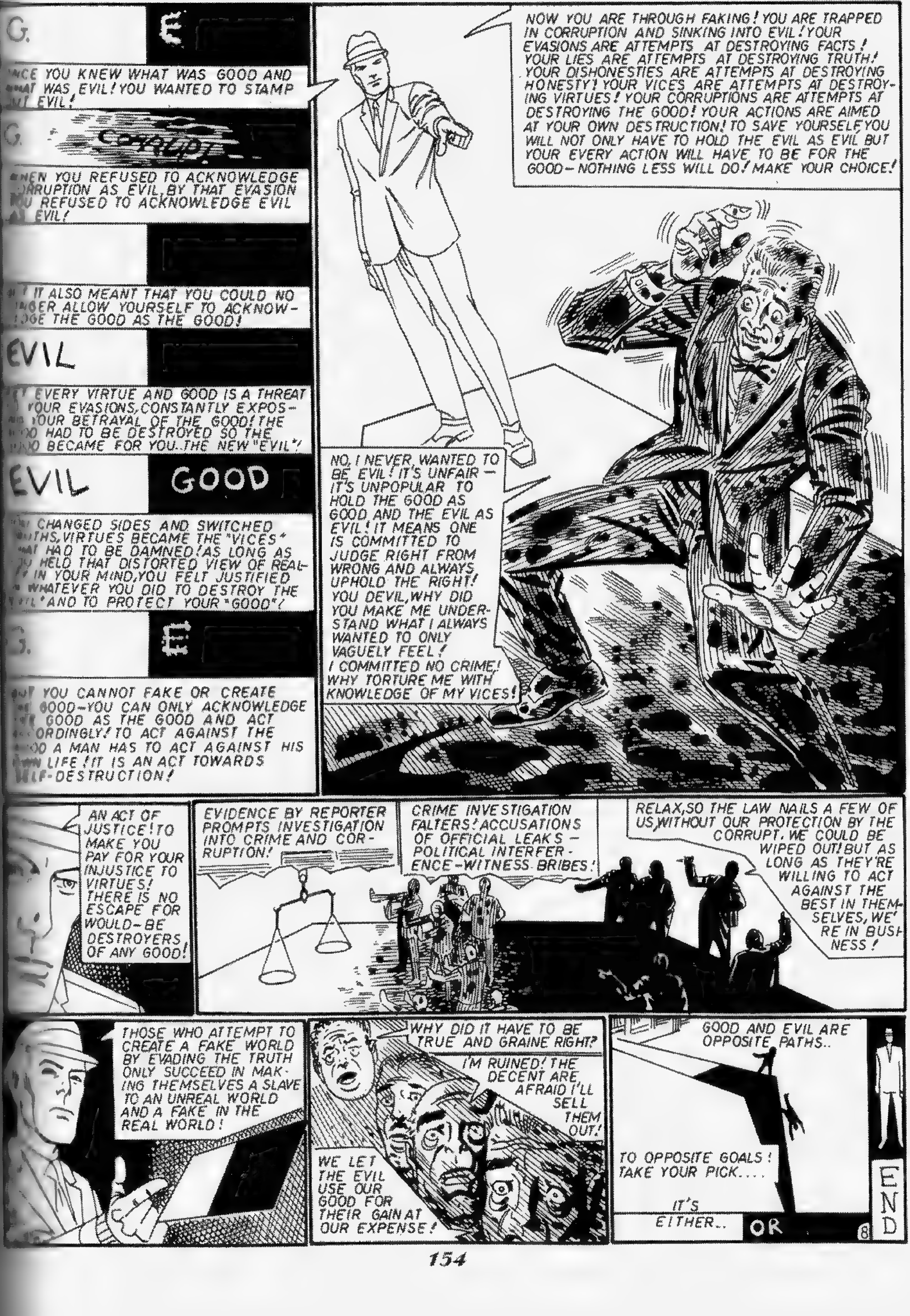
Graine's first report is met with enthusiasm, as he uncovers the city's leading racketeers. But, as subsequent evidence pours in, enthusiasm fades. Finally, when Graine reveals the "legitimate" men who have connections with racketeers, he meets open hostility. Horrified at the Pandora's Box of corruption they have uncovered, the trio balks at exposing friends.

When the three just men decide to drop the investigation, Graine continues on his own, this time in the face of their powerful opposition. When Graine refuses to bow to pressure, the three attempt to bribe him. As Graine scorns their offer, one of the trio strikes him from behind. At this point, a policeman arrives, and Graine charges his attacker with assault and battery. When we left Graine last issue, he called upon the other two citizens to corroborate his charge.


..NOTHING HAPPENED! GRAINE TRIPPED! NO ONE TOUCHED HIM!...
HOW DARE GRAINE ACCUSE ANY OF US! WE HAVE POWERFUL FRIENDS. HE WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!
SO THAT IS WHAT YOU CLAIM YOUR EYES SAW!
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S YOUR WORD AGAINST THEIRS!
NO, IT'S THEIR ACTIONS VERSUS MY ACTIONS! THEY CAN'T ESCAPE THE EVALUATION OF THEIR ACTIONS AND THEY WON'T ESCAPE FACING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THOSE ACTIONS! THEIR FEAR IS EARNED. THEIR JUDGEMENT WILL COME!
DON'T BE IMPRACTICAL, WE CAN STILL SETTLE THIS! IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! WE'LL PAY. WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US?
..WHAT I WANT FROM EVERYONE I DEAL WITH... JUSTICE AND I WON'T SETTLE FOR LESS!
HE HAS NO HEART, THE DEVIL'S DETERMINED TO RUIN US SOCIALLY!
HE'S BECOME A DANGEROUS THREAT TO THE COMMUNITY BY TURNING AGAINST DECENCY AND COMPASSION!
HE JUST WON'T LISTEN TO REASON! WHY CAN'T HE UNDERSTAND WE HAD NO CHOICE!
A-D RECORD SECT
YA, BOSS, GRAINE'S STILL DIGGING AWAY!...WHA.. A PLEASURE...DON'T WORRY!
I'LL TAKE THOSE PAPERS.. YOU JUST MOVE TO THE BACK DOOR... SLOWLY!
YOU DON'T WANT THEM FOR ANY KNOWLEDGE!
THE RULING PRINCIPLE OF THE CAREER YOU CHOSE IS.... DESTRUCTION!
IT'S TO THAT END YOU USE YOUR ABILITIES!
OKAY, BAIT. #@✱✱ I'D RATHER SLICE YOU UP WITH THIS ANYWAY..!
ANYONE WHO HAS THAT LITTLE REGARD FOR A HUMAN LIFE DOESN'T DESERV DECENT TREATMENT!


BEATING WAS
HAD THE MAN
THE HOS-
AL!
SO NOW GRAINE IS TAKING THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS! HE IS DECIDING GUILT AND ADMINISTERING PUNISHMENT!
GRAINE IS NOT GETTING AWAY WITH BEING A MENACE TO LAW AND ORDER, TO DECENCY, TO SOCIETY, TO ALL THAT WE HOLD DEAR!
FRED,..COMMISSIONER, DECENT PEOPLE DEMAND GRAINE BE PROSECUTED FOR HIS CRIMINAL ATTACK!
GRAINE DID NOT START THE TROUBLE, IT WAS STARTED BY AN ILLEGALY ARMED HABITUAL CRIMINAL!
BUT MR. SWET HAS A VALID POINT!... GRAINE DIDN'T HAVE TO BE SO VIOLENT!
POLIC
WARNING YOU,
NE, ONE
STEP AND
CRACK DOWN
YOU..
YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF TRIPPED UP BY OTHER PEOPLE'S "FALSE STEPS"!
THIS POOR MAN WAS VISCIOUSLY BEATEN BY AN ARROGANT REPORTER! THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH BRUTALITY AGAINST ANOTHER FELLOW HUMAN BEING!
THAT POOR MAN COULD BE ANY ONE OF US! NO ONE IS SAFE WHILE A WILD BEAST IS ALLOWED TO FREELY RAVAGE IN A DECENT COMMUNITY!
GRAINE HAS TO BE TAUGHT THAT HE CAN'T GET AWAY WITH ACTING ANY WAY HE PLEASES! IT IS THE COMMUNITY, NOT ANY ONE MAN, THAT COUNTS! WE'LL FIX GRAINE!
THE SOCIETY
PREVENT CRUEL-
TO CRIMINALS,
DEMAND GRAINE
CLY APOLOGIZE
HIS ANIMAL
VIOR! CRIMINALS
AS MUCH RIGHTS
ANYONE ELSE!
MUST BE PRO-
ED FROM ANTI-
AL ELEMENTS
YOUR BEASTLY
RTER!
ASE, YOU
I'LL DO
CAN!
WET, MY
FRIEND,
VOUCH
ME!
DAI
US
YES, MR SWET SAID YOU WOULD GLADLY COOPERATE BUT WE WANTED TO MAKE OUR POSITION VERY CLEAR!
PLEASE REST ASSURED, I'LL DO ALL IN MY POWER TO STOP GRAINE!
WHY DIDN'T MY BROTHER LEAVE ME A TROUBLE FREE, MONEY MAKING BUSINESS!
THERE'S GRAINE, THAT'S THE ANIMAL! HEY YOU, GRAINE....
I'M TALKING TO YOU.... YOU BARBARIAN.. YOU SHOULD BE HORSE-WHIPPED!
6


GRAINE, APOLOGIZE PUBLICLY AND SETTLE WITH ALEX OR I'LL DENOUNCE YOU IN THE PAPERS!
PRINT WHAT YOU LIKE, OPINIONS CAN'T ALTER FACTS! YOU'LL HAVE TO STAND BY WHAT YOU DO!
I'M TELLING YOU FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! TOO MANY ARE AGAINST YOU, YOU CAN'T WIN!
THE ISSUE IS, AM I RIGHT OR WRONG?
GIVE IN AND EVERYONE WILL TAKE YOU BACK AS ONE OF US! THEY'LL FORGIVE YOU IF YOU ADMIT YOU ARE HUMAN LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!
I DON'T WANT TO BE "FORGIVEN" FOR DOING WHAT IS GOOD BY FOOLS WHO UPHOLD THE EVIL! "ONE OF US" MEANS TO WILLINGLY CORRUPT ONESELF FOR THE SAKE OF THE EVIL! THAT IS YOUR IDEA OF BEING "HUMAN"!
YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE! NOW YOU'RE ALL ALONE! DON'T EXPECT MERCY FROM ME!
MY GOD... YOU'RE WITHOUT HEART OR FEELINGS! GRAINE, YOU ARE INHUMAN!
MERCY IS WHAT THE GUILTY BEG FOR! JUSTICE IS WHAT THE INNOCENT VICTIMS WANT AND WHAT EVERYONE DESERVES!
EDITORIAL PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT DENOUNCE REPORTER'S TACTICS!
DESERVES PUBLIC SCORN!
EVERYONE'S AGAINST HIM SO HE HAS TO BE WRONG!
HE'S SET HIMSELF ABOVE HUMAN DECENCY!
HE DOESN'T CARE HOW CRUEL HE IS TO HIS FELLOW MEN!
REX GRAINE IS AN EVIL MAN!
SWET IS HEADING FOR COMPLETE DESTRUCTION! HE REFUSES TO SEE THE TRUTH SO HE WILL BE SHOWN IT. THEN HE WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO HIDE BEHIND HIS SELF-BLINDNESS! HE WILL KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HE IS DOING AND TO WHAT END!
GRAINE IS MORE DEADLY THAN A PLAUGE TO A DECENT SOCIETY! WHA... NO LIGHT?
FOR THE KIND OF DARKNESS YOU HAVE INSISTED ON LIVING IN, MR. SWET, AN ELECTRIC LIGHT CAN'T HELP YOU!
WHA.... WHO.?? MR. A... W...WHY ME?
YOU ARE GOING TO SEE WHAT YOU HAVE ALLOWED YOURSELF TO BECOME!
THEN YOU WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT COURSE YOU WILL TAKE!
NO ONE ELSE CAN DO IT FOR YOU AND THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO SAVE YOURSELF!
7


G.
E
NCE YOU KNEW WHAT WAS GOOD AND AT WAS EVIL! YOU WANTED TO STAMP T EVIL!
G. CORRUPT
HEN YOU REFUSED TO ACKNOWLEDGE RRUPTION AS EVIL, BY THAT EVASION U REFUSED TO ACKNOWLEDGE EVIL S EVIL!
T IT ALSO MEANT THAT YOU COULD NO NGER ALLOW YOURSELF TO ACKNOW- DGE THE GOOD AS THE GOOD!
EVIL
T EVERY VIRTUE AND GOOD IS A THREAT YOUR EVASIONS, CONSTANTLY EXPOS- NG YOUR BETRAYAL OF THE GOOD! THE OD HAD TO BE DESTROYED SO THE OD BECAME FOR YOU..THE NEW "EVIL"!
EVIL
GOOD
U CHANGED SIDES AND SWITCHED UTHS, VIRTUES BECAME THE "VICES" AT HAD TO BE DAMNED! AS LONG AS U HELD THAT DISTORTED VIEW OF REAL- Y IN YOUR MIND, YOU FELT JUSTIFIED WHATEVER YOU DID TO DESTROY THE VIL" AND TO PROTECT YOUR "GOOD"!
G.
E
T YOU CANNOT FAKE OR CREATE E GOOD—YOU CAN ONLY ACKNOWLEDGE E GOOD AS THE GOOD AND ACT ORDINGLY! TO ACT AGAINST THE OD A MAN HAS TO ACT AGAINST HIS N LIFE! IT IS AN ACT TOWARDS LF-DESTRUCTION!
NOW YOU ARE THROUGH FAKING! YOU ARE TRAPPED IN CORRUPTION AND SINKING INTO EVIL! YOUR EVASIONS ARE ATTEMPTS AT DESTROYING FACTS! YOUR LIES ARE ATTEMPTS AT DESTROYING TRUTH! YOUR DISHONESTIES ARE ATTEMPTS AT DESTROYING HONESTY! YOUR VICES ARE ATTEMPTS AT DESTROYING VIRTUES! YOUR CORRUPTIONS ARE ATTEMPTS AT DESTROYING THE GOOD! YOUR ACTIONS ARE AIMED AT YOUR OWN DESTRUCTION! TO SAVE YOURSELF YOU WILL NOT ONLY HAVE TO HOLD THE EVIL AS EVIL BUT YOUR EVERY ACTION WILL HAVE TO BE FOR THE GOOD—NOTHING LESS WILL DO! MAKE YOUR CHOICE!
NO, I NEVER WANTED TO BE EVIL! IT'S UNFAIR— IT'S UNPOPULAR TO HOLD THE GOOD AS GOOD AND THE EVIL AS EVIL! IT MEANS ONE IS COMMITTED TO JUDGE RIGHT FROM WRONG AND ALWAYS UPHOLD THE RIGHT! YOU DEVIL, WHY DID YOU MAKE ME UNDERSTAND WHAT I ALWAYS WANTED TO ONLY VAGUELY FEEL! I COMMITTED NO CRIME! WHY TORTURE ME WITH KNOWLEDGE OF MY VICES!
AN ACT OF JUSTICE! TO MAKE YOU PAY FOR YOUR INJUSTICE TO VIRTUES! THERE IS NO ESCAPE FOR WOULD-BE DESTROYERS OF ANY GOOD!
EVIDENCE BY REPORTER PROMPTS INVESTIGATION INTO CRIME AND CORRUPTION!
CRIME INVESTIGATION FALTERS! ACCUSATIONS OF OFFICIAL LEAKS—POLITICAL INTERFERENCE—WITNESS BRIBES!
RELAX, SO THE LAW NAILS A FEW OF US, WITHOUT OUR PROTECTION BY THE CORRUPT, WE COULD BE WIPED OUT! BUT AS LONG AS THEY'RE WILLING TO ACT AGAINST THE BEST IN THEMSELVES, WE'RE IN BUSINESS!
THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO CREATE A FAKE WORLD BY EVADING THE TRUTH ONLY SUCCEED IN MAKING THEMSELVES A SLAVE TO AN UNREAL WORLD AND A FAKE IN THE REAL WORLD!
WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE TRUE AND GRAINE RIGHT?
I'M RUINED! THE DECENT ARE AFRAID I'LL SELL THEM OUT!
WE LET THE EVIL USE OUR GOOD FOR THEIR GAIN AT OUR EXPENSE!
GOOD AND EVIL ARE OPPOSITE PATHS..
TO OPPOSITE GOALS! TAKE YOUR PICK....
IT'S EITHER..
OR
8
END

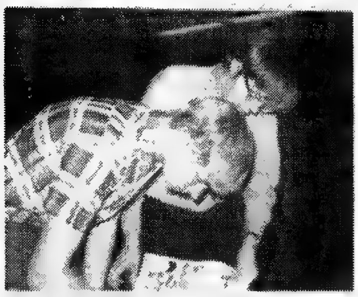
DETROIT CONTINUED...

After the auction, the next thing planned was the "Inquisition" where Leigh Brackett and Ed Hamilton were subjected to all manner of questions. However, since they mainly dealt with science fiction, which I know little about fact wise, I slipped out during the talk and discovered Al Williamson, surrounded by some fans. Natch, I sat down and listened. One thing I discovered, that was interesting: Gray Morrow was the one who created that ray gun Flash Gordon is using on the cover of #5 of King's short-lived Flash Gordon series.

After this most exciting day, the con presented two movies. "The Mummy" and the original version of Dracula, with Max Schreck playing the lead because he naturally looked the part.

Rich and I, however, were so tired that we decided to call it quits and went home.

I really must say it was quite a successful convention, with a good solid 350 people attending, at one time or other. Only the fact that there weren't Pros running around all over the place, made it less a con than the one held in New York. But who can say that one con is any better than the other? Not me. They're all just as terrific and filled with the greatest possible events ever! You have to get to one, at least once in your lifetime!



RICH BUCKLER in background

Thanks Steve, for that great report. This is Martin Greim and Bob Cosgrove, speaking for the Comic Crusader news team, saying we hope you enjoyed this issue and that we hope to see all of you, someday soon, at a future COMIC CON!

COMIC CHATTER

For this edition of Comic Chatter, let's start off by discussing subjects related to Neal Adams.

Item:

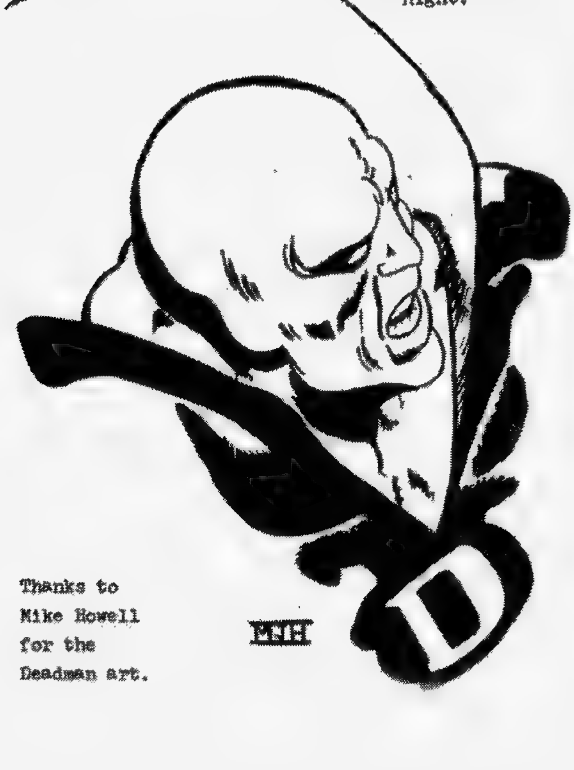
The X-Men are going to be discontinued. In spite of the tremendous Adams art, the buying public aren't buying it...so it looks like we, the fans, lose.

Item:

Neal Adams will be doing Batman in his own book. He's slated to go on Batman after one or two Brave and Bold issues. He will then not be doing any more Brave and Bold teamups.

Item:

Batman and Robin will be split up, in the December issue of Batman. Robin will be going off to college, leaving Batman to be a lone creature of the night.



Thanks to
Mike Howell
for the
Deadman art.

NEAL ADAMS
&
SYD SHORES

Item:

At the con, when Frank Frazetta was asked if he'd like to do a female super-hero cover, say, like Wonder Woman, he replied with a chuckle, "How? In a loin cloth!" Frank said later, that he would not enjoy doing super-hero covers.

Item:

For radio fans: Did you know the Lone Ranger was related to the Green Hornet? Yes, Dan Reid (The Lone Ranger's nephew) was Brit Ried's (The Green Hornet) great grandfather. On the Hornet's radio show, he used to talk about how he was related to a masked man, who upheld law and order in the Old West.

Item:

Digger and Undertaker are being dropped from Marvel's horror mags.

SPECIAL ITEM!!!!!!!

Alright gang! You've wanted news on Jim Steranko's sword and sorcery character "TALON", well here it is.

Despite claims, in some fanzines, that there will be no "TALON", or that Jim has sold it to a fanzine or to Warren Pub., here is the true story:

Jim along with Rich Hauser, is going to put "TALON" out. However, they need fandom's support!

TALON is going to be $5.00 a copy (limited print run, each copy numbered and personally autographed...this makes it rare gang!) It will be black and white, with a wrap around color painting cover. It will NOT be comics code approved.

Now here is how we fans can get "TALON".

SEND NO MONEY!!!!!!

But send a pledge of $5.00 per copy and a return self addressed envelope to: RICHARD HAUSER, 4519 N. RICHMOND, CHICAGO, ILL. 60625.

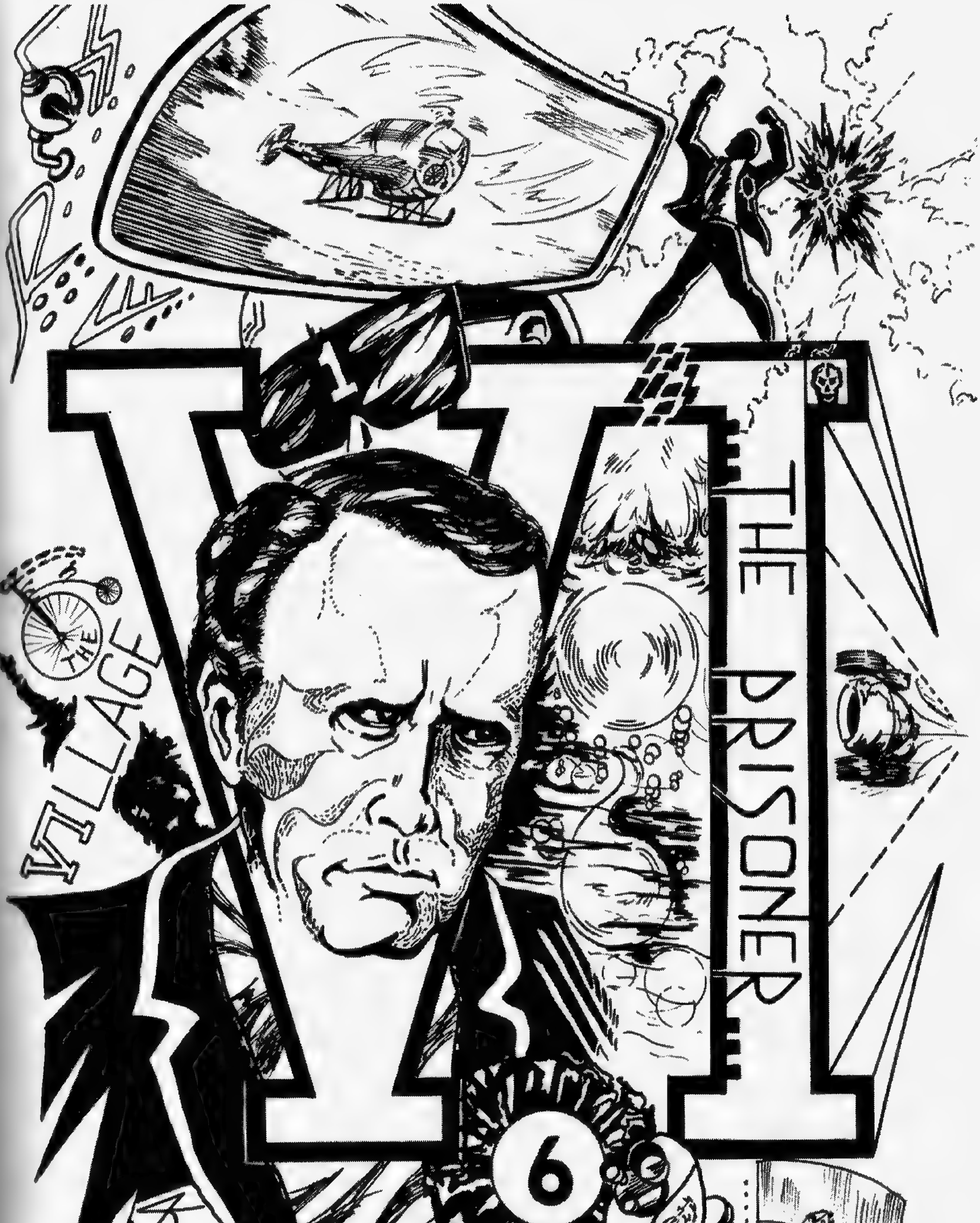
Now when enough orders are recieved to make a printing profitable, a request will be sent you (via your S.A.E.) asking you to send your $5.00. Now this is a real buy gang. I'm going to order 6 copies myself. These issues are sure to be collector's items, and fandom can make it so.

Item:

Jim has done a story for Marvel's new romance book, due out in December. It's called "My heart broke in Hollywood!" It's in a different Steranko style, so don't miss it.

Item:

Some of the paperback books that Jim has done covers for are now on the market. Lancer Pub...Prisoners of the Sky, Space Dreamers, and Tales of Sword & Sorcery. Look for them. Also due out are a series of books on W.W.I air hero stories...G-8 and his Battle Aces. Book 1. The Bat Staffel. 2. Purple Aces.



THE VILLAGE
THE PRISONER
1
6

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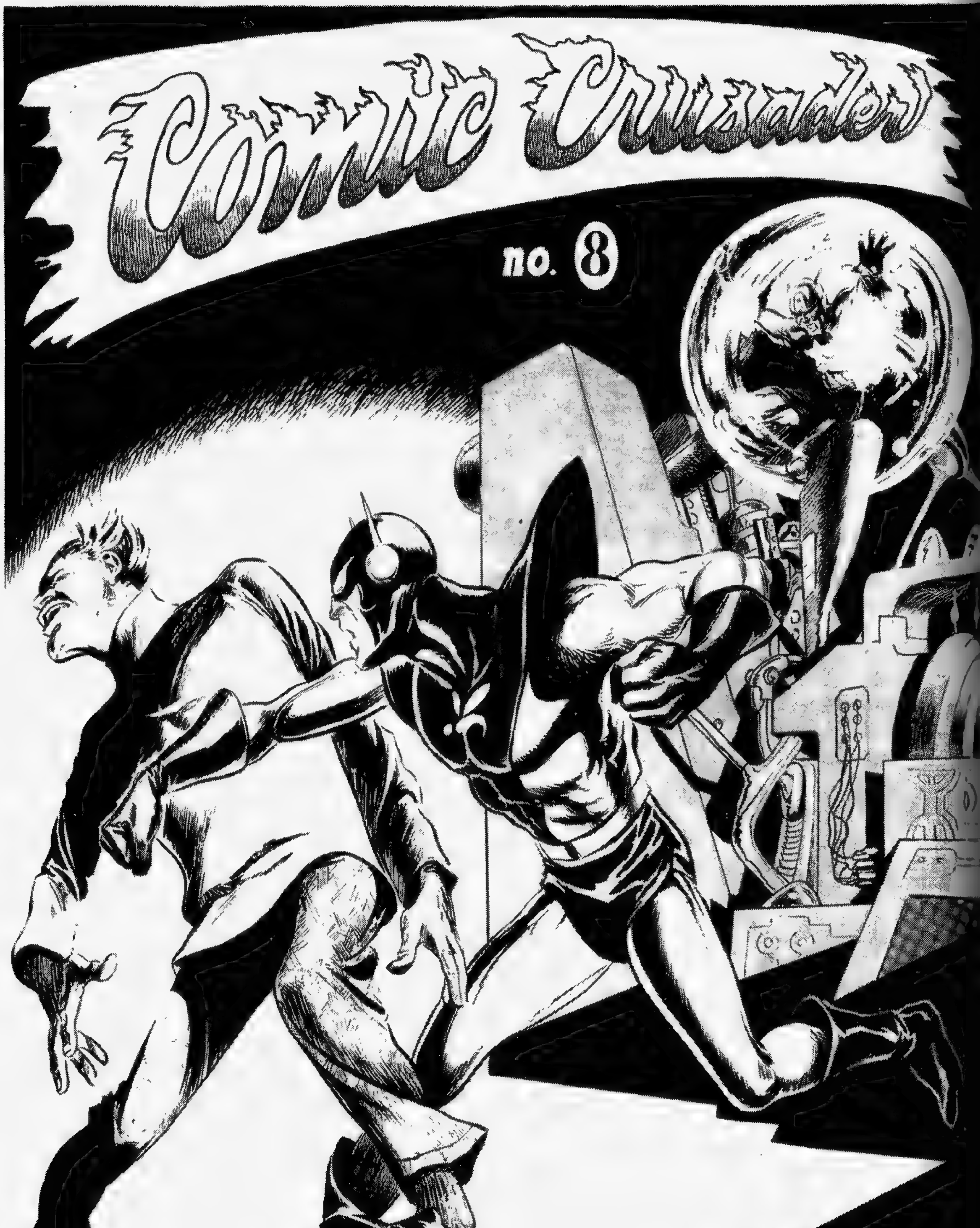
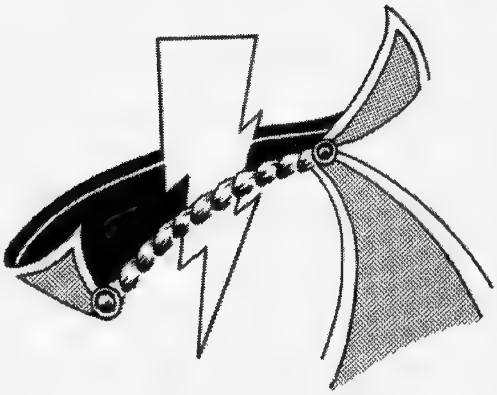

Comic Crusader
no. 8
NEWTON

CRUSADER COMMENTS

My first comment, for this issue, is to thank all you fans out there! "For what", you ask? Well, it's like this. At a time when I was undecided about whether or not "Crusader" was going to continue; I received the results of the 1968 Alley Awards. Much to my surprise, "Crusader" and I both placed well in 3 catagories. After seeing so many "crudzines" on the market, I was really beginning to wonder if anyone appreciated the quality of "The Comic Crusader". Well, the results of the Alley Awards proved many of you to appreciate the quality. As a result, I will continue publishing beyond issue #10, and it is you wonderful fans who are responsible. In fact, after issue #10 I'll be taking subscriptions again. However, till then, only order the upcoming issue. Look out fandom! BIG things are coming your way, from Comic Crusader.



As last issue was cramped for space, I didn't have a chance to welcome two new staff artists. This issue, I'd like to remedy that. First, I'd like to welcome William Black. Bill is a staff member for Creepy and Eerie and did that Dr. Strange illo, many of you commented on, in the last issue of "Crusader". Bill also puts out a zine called PARAGON and I recomend it to all of you. In fact it's the only other zine, besides "Champion", that I do regular work for. I think that much of it. (See ad page for Paragon ad.)

The second talent, I neglected to welcome, is Anthony Kowalik. Anthony, who did the two illos, to the right, is a talented idea man and has turned out some very unusual work for me. He has also reinstated an old "Crusader" feature....COMIC CORNER. You saw a sample last issue and you will be seeing more in future issues.

MASTER OF MEN!
THE SPIDER

For this issue, I welcome another new staff member...James Shull. I've always enjoyed Jim's unique style, in other zines, so I was overjoyed when he accepted my offer to be a staff member. I hope you'll enjoy his work in "Crusader".

As I begin my third year of publication, I'd like to tell you readers a little of what I have in store. You'll be seeing some fine [illegible]-strips, alternating with The Defender. They'll sport such artists as, Len Wein (DC writer), Ronn Foss, Dennis Fujitake, and a collaboration between Bill Black and myself on a hero I think you'll flip over. 1970 will also bring you more articles on the pros. Bob Cosgrove and I are researching some right now. As for art, I'll always bring you the best...Fritz, Newton, Foss, Black, Kowalik, Fujitake, and a host of other talents. Also, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if you might see work by a guy I think the world of... JIM STERANKO. For the best in writing Bob Cosgrove and Tom Fagan still be here, so how can you lose.

I may not be in the same catagory as the $1.00 - $5.00 zines, but for 35¢ you'll be sure of getting more than your money's worth and often more than a dollar's worth.

WENDY FLETCHER

I'TS HALLOWEEN EVE IN RUTLAND, VERMONT
AND AS THE MOON RISES, COSTUMED FIGURES
WAIT FOR...

the PARADE

Article....Tom Fagan

Picture Captions.....Martin L. Greim
Art...Greim, Black and Shull

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to wander up a tree-shrouded driveway - the lights of the city far behind you - and see, looming ahead of you, a mid-Victirian mansion silhouetted against the night sky and resembling, maybe a bit too closely, the House of Secrets?

How would you feel if you ventured onto a blue-lighted portico, to ring ancient chimes and have a massive, paneled door opened for you by horn-haired and bushy bearded Abel? And were you to accept his greeting, "Welcome, Enter!"...

Inside to pass by the black, cloaked Phantom Stranger in a long hallway with Tala standing at the further end. To climb a venerable staircase and from a balcony above watch Vigilante walk beneath you, acknowledging your presence with an upward glance of roguish eyes from beneath his wide stetson brim.

To descend to a cob-webbed kitchen, where Diablo Cthulhu and Satan Savachhi, two full-blooded German Shepherd warrior dogs, stand alongside The Flash, who patiently watches an oven to make certain a chicken pie simmering within, is done to just the right consistency. "It's for Batgirl's supper!" he grins noticing your startled look at a superhero coming to the rescue in such an unusual manner.

Music from "Easy Rider" is at full volume in another room, but Sue Richards doesn't seem to mind, as she is entertained by a talkative Spiderman about the forthcoming and patiently awaited issue of Alter Ego.

Psychedelic lights in still another chamber seem to bring postered motorcyclists and Cheshire cats to giddy life, while The Fly buzzes dolefully, "Hasn't anybody got a safety pin!" A minor crisis is averted, as to the amusement of The Spirit and No Man, it is The Wasp providing the means to put The Fly back into action without embarassing the general public.

You stand shock still, awed perhaps by the bespectacled stare of Cain, caretaker of the House of Mystery. Leers from The Joker and Catwoman cause you to move to an open door where stands the heroic Yellowjacket and Robin the Boy Wonder.

Theodore Baer, or is it Stuff the Chinatown Kid? stares solemnly at Queen Hippolyta, who is admiring a tempting orange-frosted cake, decorated in keeping with the season with black roses.

It is then you realize it is HALLOWE'EN.... and somehow comic book pages have become reality. And if you doubt insisting senses, the fact hammers home as a cowled and mantled figure walks among costumed companions announcing, "The Parade; it's time for THE PARADE!"

You need not be told this is The BatMan! This is his night and his eyes twinkle behind mask slits A mad swirl of color and activity follows as the costumed ladies and gentlemen heed the joyous shout "Heroes Assemble!"

Car engines snarl; gravel spits up from driveway and the entourage is moving out, headlights stabbing into the darkness. It happens in a heartbeat and suddenly you realize you are alone... alone in the House of Secrets.

Ore are you alone? Shadows scurry; curtains touched by a breeze - move toward you like groping hands. A howl echoes from a far corner, where Diablo and Satan stand guard in sentinel solitude.

Above, bats circle the ceilings. A record player clicks silent. The emptiness of the house is almost unbearable. You hear another sound. Footsteps! Footsteps coming toward you.

Without looking back, you run from the house. Dash through the night to your own car. And behind you, kindly Mary Fagan, watches you go, wondering, "What in the world got into him; I thought he'd stay for the party!"

Impossible? A super put-on? Too many Black Labels? A bum trip or some bad points? Couldn't happen you say? Something straight out of a comic book writers nightmare. Real life just isn't like that!

That's where you're wrong, man; that's where you're mistaken, girl! Happen it did and "thass a fact," as Li'l Abner and Moonbeam McSwine might exclaim. There are pictures to prove it (You're looking at some of them right now) and for those

TOM FAGAN, M.L.G., AND RICH RUBENFELD FLY THE NIGHT LEGION FLAG FROM TOM'S HOUSE OF SECRETS.

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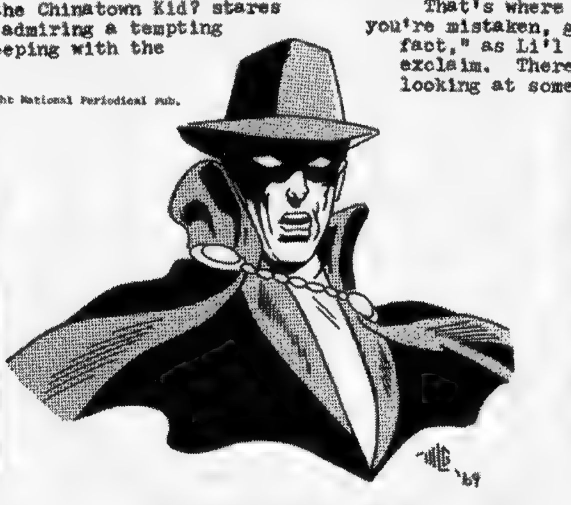
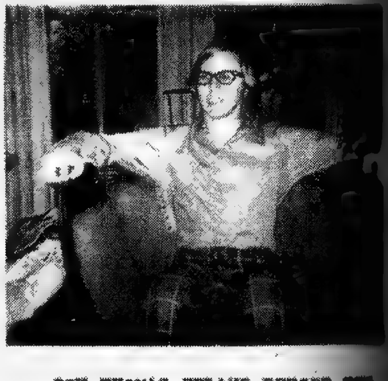


THE PHANTOM STRANGER



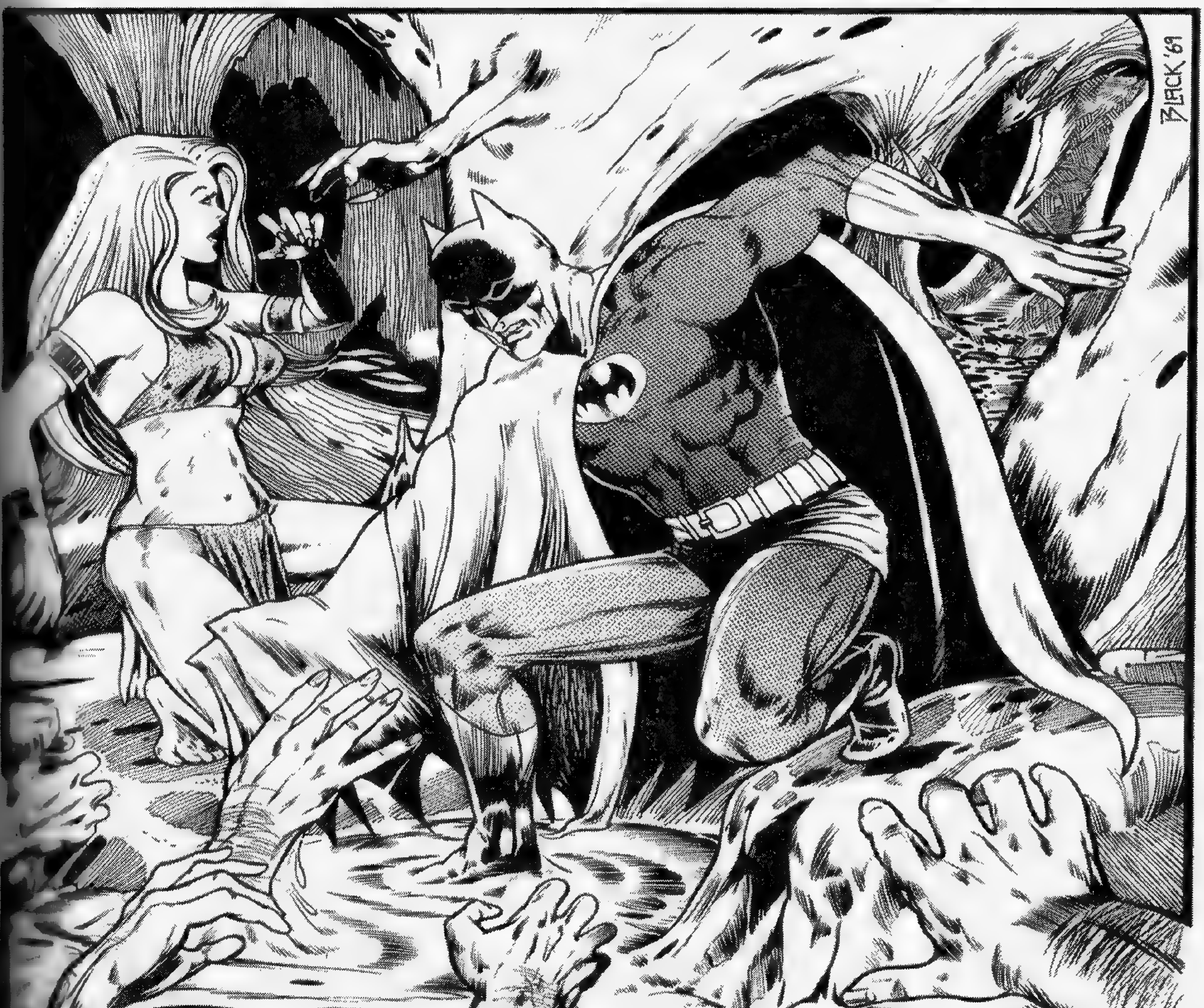
ROY THOMAS RELAXS BEFORE THE EVENINGS FESTIVITIES.

HANERFEL
INS THE TASK OF
ING UP LIKE
OF THE HOUSE
SECRETS.
WAS THE MODEL
THIS CHARACTER,
THE WAY.

AH HA! ENTER THE
PHANTOM STRANGER
AND NO-MAN.
(Portrayed by
Andy Yanchus and
Marvin Wolfman)
THESE TWO EERIE
CHARACTERS LEND
AN AURA OF MYSTERY,
THIS HALLOWEEN
NIGHT.

MARTIN (Yellow-
Jacket) GREIM AND
BOB (The Fly)
COSGROVE SEEM TO
BE DISAGREEING.
ZAP! GOT YOU BOB.

DON'T LOOK NOW
MISS, BUT THERE'S
A BIG BUG BEHIND
YOU! OH, YOU SAY
THAT'S YOUR
HUSBAND. YOU MUST
BE JEAN (Invisible
Girl) THOMAS AND
THE BUG, ROY
(Spiderman)
THOMAS.



OUR HOST, AND VERMONT'S RESIDENT COMIC FAN.... TOM FAGAN.

A SKINNY YELLOW-JACKET?

A GREAT PAIR. AL (The Joker) BRADFORD AND HIS GIRL FRIEND SUSAN (Catwoman) O'NEIL.

A FLABBY FLY?

who participated, a host of memories of fun and fellowship centering around "The Night of BatMan" ---Hallowe'en 1969!"

It just didn't take place with a wave of a magic wand, though, far from it. It was ten years in the making moreover - and more immediately - weeks and months of planning and hardwork went into its staging.

Those responsible were many. They included Recreation Department workers, members of Night Legion, Rutland County Charter Chapter; The T.I.S.O.S. Club of New York City and beyond; civic organizations, colleges and schools; the beautiful people of fan and pro doms, and those to whom Hallowe'en Night is more than the 31st day on the October calendar.

It came about from talks at the 1969 Comic Con in New York City, September conferences in Boston, and an October flurry of activity spanning Maine and Illinois, with Vermont as the focal center. And all the hetic moments climaxed with the celebration of THE TENTH ANNUAL HALLOWE'EN - BATMAN PARADE in Rutland, Vermont.

Directing what over the years has become Rutland's largest and most colorful holiday processional, was again Recreation Commissioner, John W. Cioffredi and Parade Chairman & Night Legion Chapeau, Tom Fagan. They had their work cut out for them, for they were determined to make "The Big Tenth" the most successful parade ever. And thanks to help from innumerable sources, the two parade-cofounders realized their dream.

With Cioffredi contacting bands and marching units, Fagan wrote up clues leading to the identity of Mr. Jack O'Lantern who would be unmasked at the Parade's end. A contest was run among area high schools to select a "Pumpkin Princess" to rule over the march. With assignments divided, the Night Legionnaires undertook the making of floats, on which BatMan and other comic book personnages would ride. In addition a festive party would culminate the celebrations.

Original sketches for mammoth float backdrops were supplied by Jim Steranko, Sam Grainger, Martin Greim and Tom Fagan. Steranko's beautiful drawing depicted BatMan, BatGirl, Robin and The Flash in action pose. Yellowjacket, The Wasp and The Fly in flight formation, was the subject of Grainger's artistry. Greim and Fagan combined drawings of The Invisible Girl and Spiderman. Night Legion paint brushes deftly applied by Jerry Ragosta, Russ Berry, Nick Marro, Harold "Eight" Berger, Tom Blayton, George Campbell and Fagan, brought the posters into being; working evenings into early morning hours.

For a special party, one needs special invitations. No finer to be found were ones designed by Dave Serette, owner and publisher of the Yellow Kid Press of Portland, Maine. Serette outdid himself with his masterpieces, which were to become treasured souveniers. A bat emblazoned one side and the other printed to resemble burnt and faded parchment read in part:

> "By decree of dread Cthulhu you have been
> chosen to join in the true celebration of
> Hallowe'en designated for observance this
> year of 1969 on the evening of Friday,
> October 31st at
> Clement Estate
> off Field Avenue and
> Grove Street in haunted Rutland, Vermont.
>
> "Dark Festivity will commence at the eldritch
> hour of nine of the clock.
> Come guised as an
> Elder God or the Establishment.
> "Your hosts, Tom, Mary, and Deana Fagan...."

Invitations swept out into the mails and acceptances were acknowledged in person, by letter and by phone. In the midst of Clement House's transformation from a former governor's mansion, built in 1867, to the House of Secrets, Dave Kaler and Richard Rubenfeld sent word, "The T.I.S.O.S. will be there!" Roy and Jean Thomas called to announce they would be arriving as Spiderman and Sue Richards. Greim telephoned to announce he and his wife, Ellie, would show up as Yellowjacket and The Wasp and with them would be Bob Cosgrove as The Fly. Daily the list grew to include college professors, social workers, newspaper people, students, representatives of the publishing field, city employees, and even a state senator and a psychiatrist!

Those who would stay the weekend at the House of Secrets began arriving the night before the night of nights. First on the scene was the Greimmobile with Cosgrove and the Greims, who were immediately ushered inside to pass approval on a huge blowup picture of Batman. As Greim inspected the 9' x 7' depiction of a smaller sketch he himself had originally drawn, he remarked, "But Tom, it doesn't have the yellow circle." This brought about a theological discussion that BatMan would never - at the least in the Fagan household - wear a yellow circle about the bat insignia; no matter if National decreed it be so drawn for 30 years more.

Though BatMan was not expected until the following night, his uniform had been sent ahead. A major tragedy was discovered; his cowl was earless! In true superheroine fashion, Ellie Greim produced needle and thread to sew the ears in place and one less cause for concern was averted.

The following day, early in the afternoon, two cars

COME 'ERE, BABY!

ELLIE (The Wasp) GREIM

YES, THERE IS AN IRENE (Tala) VARTANOFF, ESCOURTED BY DAVE KALER, NOT YET IN COSTUME?

ELLIE, DO YOU KNOW YOU SMILE WHEN YOU SAY PROVALONE?

THE JOKER AND CATWOMAN ARE GANGING UP ON BATMAN.

A REAL DYNAMIC DUO. LEN (Cain) WEIN AND MARK (Abel) HANERFELD.

drove up almost simultaneously. The Tisos group arrived and hardly had they done so, when another vehicle came up the drive carrying the Thomas'.

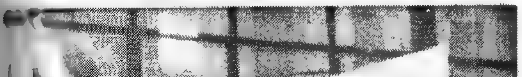
Immediately, after introductions, the talk was about comic books. A hurried catching up of the current and future scene of the industry, artists and writers, and time to ready for the night ahead and The Parade.

Mark Hanerfeld and Len Wein produced makeup kits to become Abel and Cain respectively.

Dave Kaler appeared as the Vigilante, as Andy Yankus saved his hat, just in time from a burrowing "Spirit" (Eliot Wagner) and emerged as The Phantom Stranger confronting Irene Vartanoff, completing the finishing touches on her Tala costume. Rich Rubenfeld became The Flash; Ellen Vartanoff, appeared as Queen Hippolyta; Marvin Wolfman, materialized as No Man, and Michelle Kreps, declared intentions of going to the parade as Vickie Vale.

Almost parade time. Then still another car veered into the driveway, having traveled from Braintree, Mass. "Are we in time," asked Al Bradford and Susan O'Neil breathlessly? Within moments they were transformed into the Joker and Catwoman.

While the good natured raillery continued, Robin The Boy Wonder stepped into the costumed circle. And their entrance, likewise, unnoticed BatMan and BatGirl suddenly were standing there.



ONE OF THE BIGGEST THRILLS OF MY LIFE, RIDING (freezing) ON A FLOAT AS YELLOW JACKET.

Not for long though! With capes flying and Marvin Wolfman's cry of, "It finally happened; Batman meets The Wolfman!" the colorful crew vaunted into their waiting vehicles...their destination, The Parade. Thousands, crowded Rutland streets, in anxious anticipation. Again, another problem, not encountered in comic books. Cars became separated and ended up at different ends of the Green Mountain Plaza, the parade site. However, after a short wait in the cold night air, this problem was taken care of and everyone clambered aboard their floats. Newcomers now were added. The Red Skull (Jerry Ragosta) and BatMite.

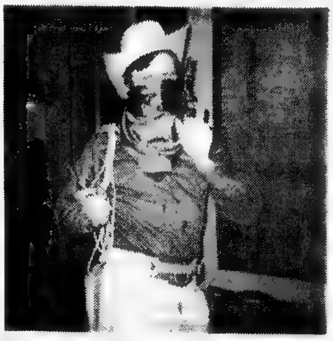
As parade marshalls, BatMan and BatGirl gave the signal to begin. Commissoner Cioffredi relayed the message and a total of 31 musical and marching units moved out sharply. Applause and recognition greeted the marchers and float riders. Guns of the Vigilante barked above the din. No Man was impervious to the buzz weapon of The Fly. The comic book compatriots waved to their fans, both old and young alike, and some, like BatMan and The Spirit, flashed the peace sign to the crowds who acknowledged it in return.

"You know it's cold!" shivered Tala. "No problem," advised The Flash, "Just vibrate like I do!" Abel winked the flashlight eyes of his umbrella skull head handle to delight awed youngsters, while Cain peered sinisterly over his spectacles with just the right amount of menace in his smile.

Up one roadway, down another and over more streets the parade proceeded in triumphal procession and all too soon, it filed back into the shopping center where youngsters darted off in search of trick n' treats and Hallowe'en joys.

Returning to the House of Secrets, lights streamed from every window. A sumptuous holiday fare prepared by Mary Fagan awaited the marchers in the parade. Some switched to civilian identities, while others remained in costume to greet the first of the many party guests that followed.

New festive spirit shifted into gear. Acid rock competed over the fun-filled din created by over 150 persons that arrived as the night progressed. Costumes were everywhere. The Shadow, Julius Caesar, pumpkin people, a dragon puffing smoke, and even the unexpected appearance of The Crypt Keeper and The Old Witch from E.C.'s limbo The party lasted 'til dawn!



DAVE (Vigilante) KALER, IN COSTUME? A GUY I'M GLAD I MET.

Sunday, it was officially over. Farewells were exchanged and the Greimmobile rolled down the driveway to return to Braintree and Dedham, Mass. The T.I.S.O.S. vehicles, now equipped with "walkie-talkie" receivers departed. Last to leave were Roy and Jean Thomas, who, like the rest, vowed return visits.

The yard, save for Diablo and Satan, was deserted and the November late morning air cold. Inside, the house seemed strangely quiet and empty. Later, the posters and decorations would be taken down; A.J. Marro and Dick Griffith would dismantle the musical sound system and quiet would truly descend.

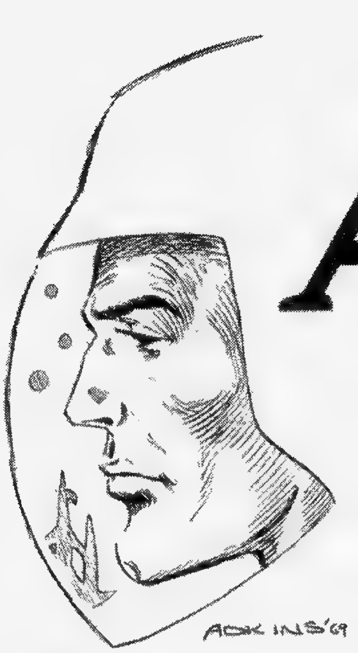
One could stare at the Rockefeller Rabbit picture sent on by J. Randolph "Steed" Cox from Northfield, Minnesota, and recall the October 31st phone call from Salt Lake City and Mike Evans wishing the parade and party, success.

Loads of memories...

IT WAS A VERY GOOD HALLOWE'EN!!!

Ahead...

NEXT HALLOWE'EN AND BATMAN NIGHT OF 1970!!!



ADKINS.....

BY COSGROVE AND GREIM

(WITH INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY.....DAN ADKINS.)

ART BY: DAN ADKINS, Steve Fritz, William Black and Martin L. Greim

At every comicon, an alert observor can spot dozens of young fans, pro hopefuls, who approach Dick Giordano and Stan Lee, displaying their wares to a hopefully receptive audience. Many a fan has dreamed of walking into an editor's office with samples, and being rewarded with a top strip. Sometimes it happens that way. More often, the road to an increasingly less glorious career of fame and glory is a long and arduous one. Such a road was trod by Dan Adkins.

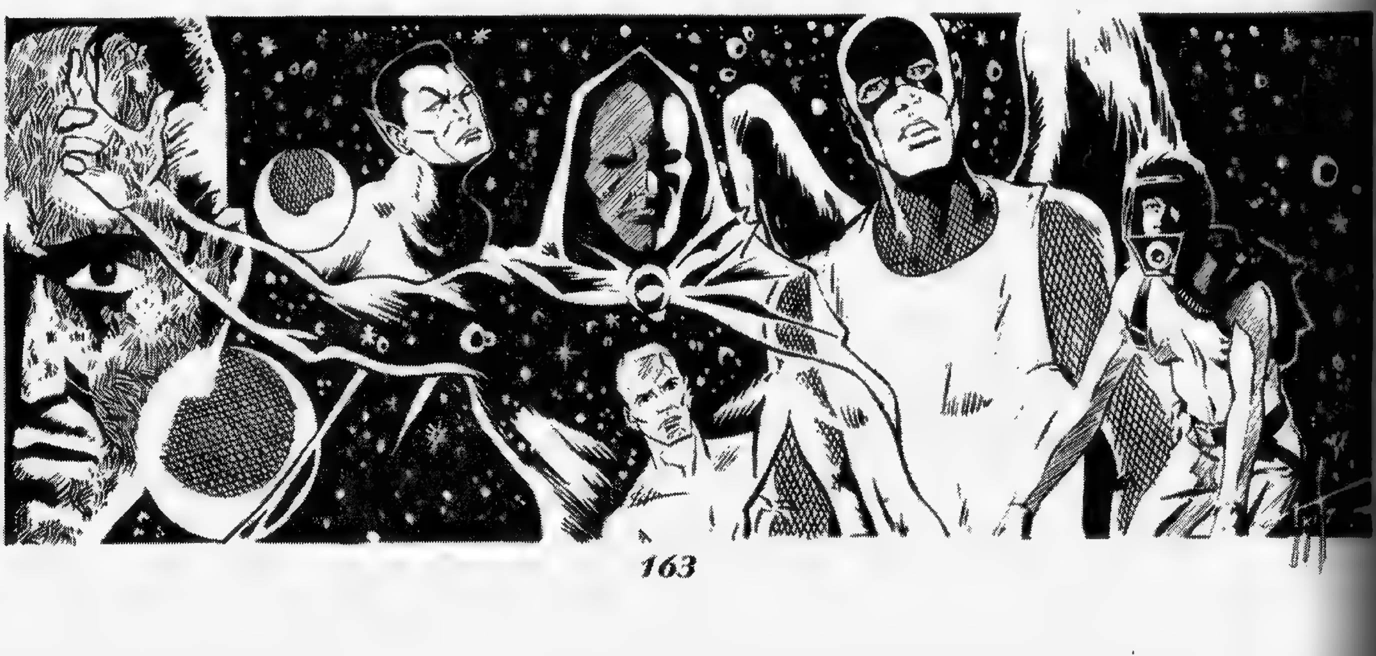
Dan, in fact, ran into an early helping of bad luck when he developed Rheumatic Fever at 13 and spent a year in bed, paralyzed from the waist down. Later, he became art editor of his school paper and yearbook, while in high school and at the same time discovered the world of science fiction magazines and fanzines. Leaving high school, he enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he learned more about art, and did a little drafting. While still in the service, Dan began a fanzine, SATA, as well as doing work for dozens of other fan publications. Also, he sold art to ART and CAMERA and OTHER WORLDS SCIENCE FICTION. Dan somewhat modestly describes his art in those bygone teenage days as "terrible."

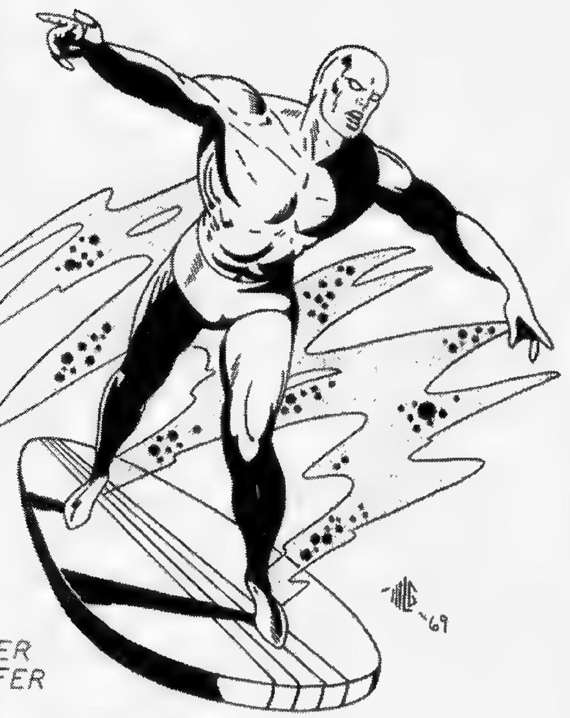
Released from the service, Dan stayed in Phoenix, Arizona. "I was trying," he states, "to get this girl to marry me. She wouldn't. Bill Pearson and I went to New York to 'make it'. We didn't. But I sold some art to INFINITY SCIENCE FICTION and MONSTER PARADE. I went back to Phoenix to get this girl to marry me. She still wouldn't. I came back to New York and got a job in an art studio doing lettering. Met Larry Ivie, Archie Goodwin, Al Williamson and a few others. Got a letter from Phoenix. The girl said she'd marry me. I told her to come to New York. She did and we got married. I was now 22 and she was 18. We've been married almost 10 years now and have a little boy going on 4."

Still in New York, Dan worked intermittently with various studios for about five years, until he finally began making a decent living. He did illustrations for AMAZING SCIENCE FICTION and FANTASTIC SCIENCE FICTION in his spare time. And, by this time, it was clear that Dan was no longer the modest lad of yore. "90% of the artwork was still terrible," he claims.

It was at this point that Dan decided to try his hand at another fanzine. The name: OUTLET...a magazine advertised throughout fandom. Dan decided to try to get Wally Wood to do the cover, and went to his studio to talk about it. Wood agreed, provided Dan would do some pencilling for him. Dan agreed, and somehow the cover, and OUTLET, never materialized. Instead, Dan quit his regular job at the studio and began working for Wally on the new line of Tower Comics. At the same time, his illustrations began to appear in GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION, IF SCIENCE FICTION, and the popular WORLDS OF TOMORROW.

The first Adkins pencils that graced the pages of a pro magazine was "At the Mercy of The Iron Maiden," a Dynamo story that appeared in the very first issue of Thunder Agents. Dan continued his apprenticeship with Wood for some sixteen months. During that time, he not only pencilled Wally's Tower stories, but also had a hand in some Wood bubble-gum cards and pencilled some of Wally's Gold Key work. One nice example of Adkins work, often overlooked by fandom, is his pencilling of a fairly faithful Gold Key adaptation of FANTASTIC VOYAGE.





THE SILVER SURFER

After a few months, Dan began getting his name on the cover credits, and left Wally for the Marvel Comics bullpen. During the last months with Wally, he continued his work with the SF mags and freelanced at Warren Publications. Here Dan turned out some of his best work; working on the SF material he enjoys, and following Archie Goodwin's skillful breakdowns. Adkins was good on war material. He was good on wierd stuff like "The Wanderer!" He was excellent on Outer Space/Other dimension material, like "The Doorway!" But he was superb on one effort in particular, a story titled "The Day After Doomsday", a masterpiece that saw printer's ink in Creepy #24. Few panels in any comic, anywhere, have shown the understanding of contrast and the attention to detail, that the splash panel to the Doomsday story presents in breathtaking fashion.

One of Dan's first assignments at Marvel was to draw Dr. Strange. Possibly the most difficult of all Marvel characters, Strange was abandoned by Steve Ditko at the peak of the swipe success. Bill Everett had managed to keep him a going concern, and then the strip had gone steadily down hill. Now Dan's assignment was to "Draw it like Ditko." Although forced to rely on a steady diet of obvious Ditko swipes, especially in the earlier issues, Dan succeeded in maintaining the Ditko flavor, raising the strip to former glory, and giving it his own air of inking elegance. In an origin recap in Dr. Strange #49, he presented a beautiful, elegant presentation which marked the high point of his work on that strip. Meanwhile, he also knocked of an excellent interim issue of the X-Men, which presented the best version of Marvel Girl yet--not excepting Steranko's or Adams'.

Dan didn't enjoy pencilling, especially at Marvel, where he had to plot his own stories, and where he didn't feel that he was a good story teller. Although he loathes the thought of another artist inking HIS pencils, Dan very much enjoys inking the pencils of various other artists, and welcomes the challenge of a new penciller. A skilled brushman, Dan has met with various degrees of inking success. Those who envisioned another Kirby-Wood issue, when Dan inked Captain America, were in for a disappointment, as Dan lost the power and beauty of Jack's chunky pencils and imparted none of Wood's dimensional elegance.

He fared much better though, in inking the Marie Severin Sub-Mariner. Severin, a great cartooning talent, was never well suited for serious work, but with Adkins all but redrawing Sub-Mariner, the strip became a thing of beauty. At some point, however, Dan must have decided that the pay he was receiving to perform plastic surgery on Severin faces was not commensurate with the work, and he thus slipped back to merely inking her.

Dan seemed to have just the right touch on the Sub-Mariner, and it was when he took over the inks, that the Buscema version began to soar to heights of glory. Dan was at the inking helm of the best Sub-Mariner voyage to date, "In the Rage of Battle," in Sub-Mariner #8.

Dan reached his inking peak, however, with the Captain Marvel issues, pencilled by the talented Gil Kane. Dan managed to impart a look of depth and elegance, as well as a touch of Wood, to the Kane pencils. However, he lost little of Gil's own striking style, thus proving himself Gil's best inker ever, including Wally himself.

Ironically, some of Dan's poorer work is now being done on his favorite character, the Silver Surfer, which is also hampered by very fuzzy printing and the worst coloring in comics. Color is slopped by an incompetent who delights in filling midnight scenes with glowing tones of orange, yellow and shocking pink. Although currently on the downbeat, Dan is bound to break out with more fine work in the future, especially on the resurrected Captain Marvel.

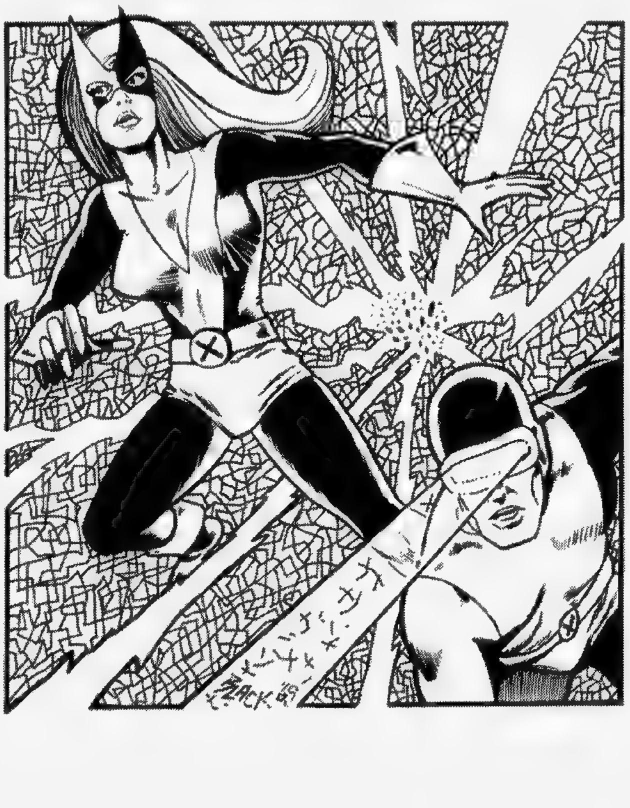
Nice guys, the old saying goes, finish last, and Dan Adkins has had his problems, including the much publicized but unprinted 23 page STARHAWK strip that he pencilled and inked. His problem with this, was simply that the powers to be, at Marvel, didn't think a science fiction strip would sell.

I suppose no article on Dan Adkins would be complete without mentioning swiping. Throughout Dan's career his greatest unfair obstacle, has been the constant charge of swiping leveled at him by the ignorant, smaller minds of fandom, who have little understanding of anything in comics except "pretty pictures." There have been articles, by the score, condeming Dan of everything from tracing to immorality. There are some fans, who have actually done months of research, just to compile a file on Adkins' swipes. (Sorry you wasted all that time, guys. Dan lists his swipes on the next page.) It is your editors opinion that these fans have something loose upstairs or are to immature to know the difference. I've always believed that comics are to be read and enjoyed. So when a fan sits down and checks panel for panel for swipes, it seems like such a waste of time. He could put his time to much better use, like say, cutting out paper dolls.

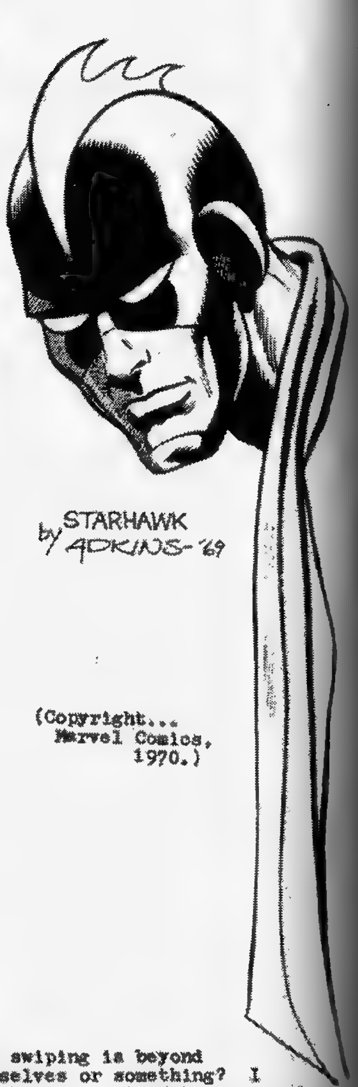
Your editor too, has come under the indignant blasts of an occasional critic. However, I'm in a different position than Dan. I can tell my critics to go to hell. Just because there is a swipe in a story, does it lessen your enjoyment of the story? Do you shy away from a magazine, that has tremendous art, because you know the artist swipes? If you do, then you certainly can't call yourself a comic collector. Well done art (and notice I say well done) should be enjoyed, and the fan who doesn't enjoy it, because of swiping, is taking a loss.

Some fans have said, anyone can swipe. This is a farce, and is usually said by people who can't draw a straight line. Creative swiping, like Dan's, has never failed in dramatic story telling. In comics, the picture often tells the story. If the art isn't creative, the swiping might as well be traced; but if it's imaginative, like Dan's, it is a thing of beauty.

In spite of swipe criticism, Dan remains a friend of fandom, contributing art, writing letters and helping friends. He enjoys the friendship of many in the business, like Steranko, Pearson, Wood, Morrow, and Jones. Bigger than his critics, Dan remains a nice guy to the end. On the next page, after several years of silence, Dan has decided to publicly answer his self-appointed foes.



OH, MY ACHING BACK... OR HOW I SPENT 731 HOURS LOOKING THROUGH 3,652 OLD MAGAZINES, 23 FILE CABNETS, 174 NEWSPAPERS TO FIND AN INSPIRATIONAL GUIDE FOR A DR. STRANGE SPLASH PAGE AND SOME JERKY KID IN ILLINOIS LOOKS AT IT FOR ¼ OF A SECOND AND SCREAMS, "ADKINS SWIPED THAT FROM PAGE 7 OF PURPLE MONSTERS, NO. 78, JULY 18TH, 1943 ISSUE!"...



(Copyright... Marvel Comics, 1970.)

by Dan L. Adkins-

Every now and then some nut, who must love to waste his time, pops up and starts on this "Adkins swipes" routine. Upon hearing this lost voice in the wilderness, I usually moan, "Oh no...not again!"

This sort of thing has been going on for about twelve years, which just happens to be about the same length of time I've been in this business of drawing for magazines. Well, actually there were a few guys moaning and groaning about me when I worked for the science fiction fanzines. Larry Ivie even went so far as to give a slide show at one of the world science fiction conventions on my swiping. He threw in Virgil Finlay and a few others to add some taste to the show. Afterwards, he went home and did his own share of swiping. Of course he doesn't admit to swiping. That's not his bag. He likes to give constructive criticism. "Hey kid, I don't like the way you sign your work!" He could better spend his time learning how to draw. I mean, he can't even swipe good!

But that was some time ago. Now its someone besides Larry. I guess there's several people on this kick, from what I'm told. I haven't been paying that much attention to fan mail or fanzines. At one of the comic book conventions a group of kids came up to me and asked, "Do you swipe?" I usually try to keep my cool and reply, "You're damn right I do!" I figure that's pretty clear. But they usually keep on bugging me 'till I have to say, "Go away kid! Go protest the war or something!"

Like, don't they know almost every artist has swiped at one time or the other? Some do it all the time. Very few go through life without swiping at one time or the other. What's the big deal?

How about Al Williamson and those British comics? Or Wally Wood, picking up on old Raymond, Foster and Crandall jazz? Gil Kane taking from Jack Kirby? Al Torries and Gray Morrow using Raymond? Surely those big-eyes are hep to the scene?

After all, if it's good enough for Picasso, Dali, Rubens and Titan, why not?

Of course they might know of Picasso taking from African art. They probably don't know Picasso from Dick Ayers! Perhaps they can spot Ralph Reese, Jeff Jones, Bernie Wrightson, Wayne Howard, Tom Sutton or Mike Royer. After all, their sources aren't too old.

Why someone goes around doing research on swiping is beyond me. Do fans do that to draw attention to themselves or something? I mean, do they hope to become known by linking their name to a known name? Or do they find it easier to try and destroy instead of creating something of their own? Preach hate instead of love?

I'll admit it can be interesting. I took a swipe from Gil Kane once and was interested in where he had gotten it from. It came from Russ Heath, I learned with a little searching. And, with a little more time, I found Russ Heath took his from Hogarth. I quit there, because I figured Hogarth made the original up.

Gil, Russ, or I could have made up our own figure of course, as all professional artists can draw without swiping. Sometimes its deadline pressure, or using assistants, or whatever that causes the use of swipes. Mostly, it's habit and the fact that people like to swipe. You can find the same thing going on with writers, movies, records, or what have you.

If you younger people can't understand, remember, we've been young, but you've never been old. When you get older there are a lot of things you will learn to understand.

Anyway, I've grown tired of looking through all the magazines for swipes. It's a hell of a lot of work. It use to be worth it, as every time I took a swipe, I learned something. Now I figure I've learned enough to do my own thing, but I'm still too tired of drawing to get back in the swing of things. It's so much easier to ink.

For you collectors out there:

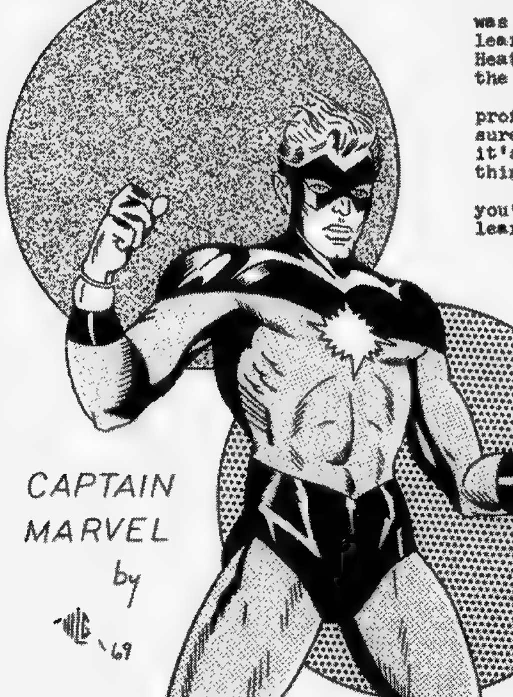
Out of 958 comic book panels, 646 have been swipes of one sort or the other. 312 were made up.

Out of 8 paintings, 1 was a swipe from various things. 7 made up, or from photographs in part.

Out of 203 science fiction illustrations, 112 had swipes. 91 didn't.

With no art education, how did you expect me to learn? Man, I didn't even finish high school! Still yet, I made $12,000.00 last year. I may not be the greatest artist around, but I try to get along with what I've got. I think some fans could make better use of their time than looking for swipes that I've used. Try taking some yourself...

END

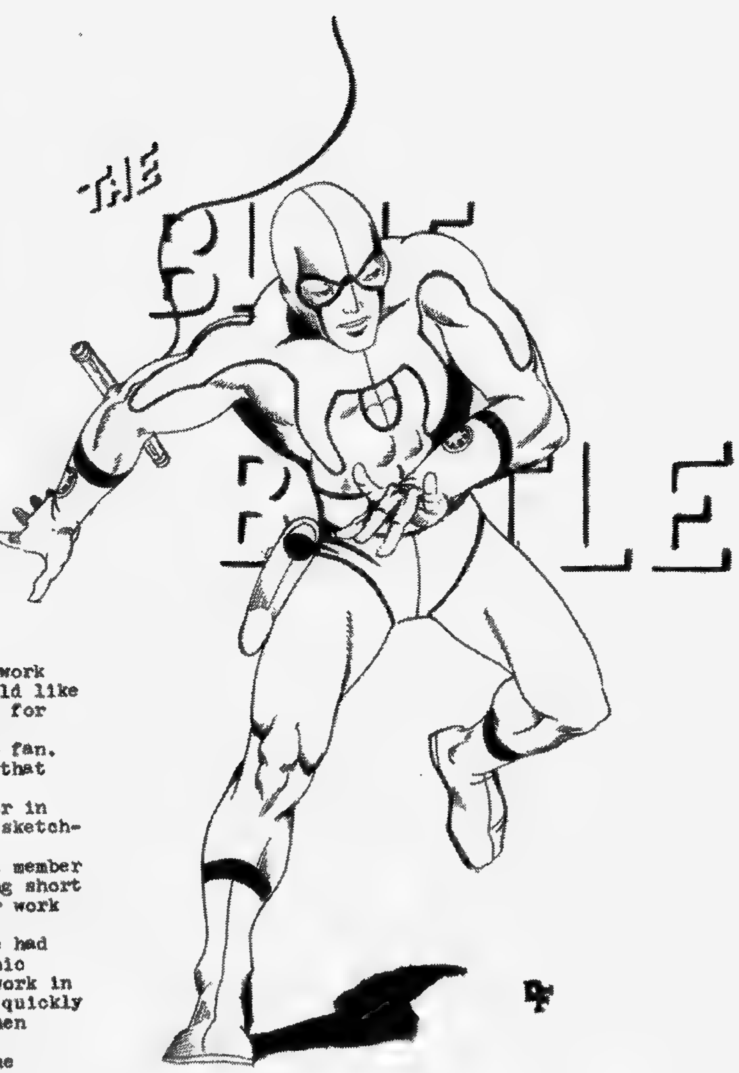


(Copyright...Marvel Comics, 1970.)

Since its begining, The Comic Crusader has tried to present the best in fan art. With issue #5, Crusader was fortunate enough to obtain the talents of a young man from Hawaii.

With him, he brought the talents of two other top artists.....Keith Fukumitsu and Gary Kato. Both of whom will be spotlighted here, at a future date.

I've received many letters asking me about him; so with a great deal of pride, I present an all to short feature on......................



DENNIS FUJITAKE

I first became aware of Dennis' talents early in January of 1969. I received a package from him containing many of the fine pieces of art you've seen in past issues of "Crusader". Dennis lives in Honolulu and told me of the comics club he and his friends have there. It's called The Strange Comics Club! I was very impressed with the work Dennis had sent me, so I asked if he and his friends would like to become staff members of Comic Crusader. Fortunately, for me, they accepted.

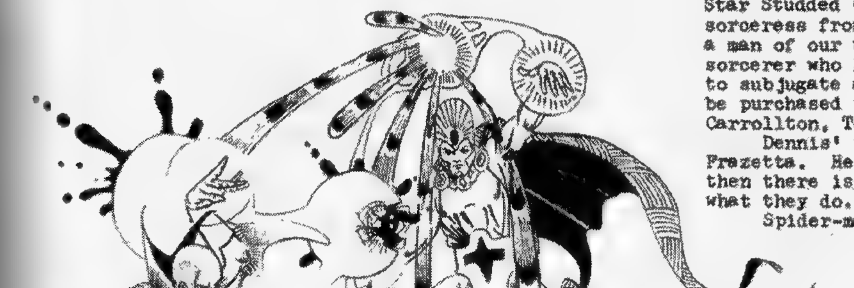
Dennis, as you can see by his art, is a Steve Ditko fan. Steve influences Dennis' art tremendously. So much so, that many of Dennis' renditions almost match his mentor's.

Dennis started drawing ama-comics in his junior year in high school, though actually he had enjoyed drawing and sketching since his early days in kindergarten.

While in high school, Dennis met Keith Fukumitsu, a member of their present comics club. He and Keith began trading short illustrated stories and soon became good friends. Their work was done entirely in pencil.

Then, to Dennis' surprise, he found that someone he had known for quite a few years had been drawing amateur comic magazines. This was Gary Kato. Gary had rendered his work in ball point and colored pencil and both Dennis and Keith quickly picked up this technique and used it until recently. Then they began experimenting with India ink.

It was just after graduation, that Dennis formed The Strange Comics club. The clubs motto is, "We exist for the advancement of comic art!" The club has seven members, including both Keith and Gary. In this club, there is a kind of subtle competition, that brings out the best in all of them.



The work you have seen in The Comic Crusader, is the first work Dennis had ever submitted for publication in a fanzine of any sort. Although, now you can read a terrific strip by Dennis, in the current issue of Star Studded Comics. It's a story of how a beautiful sorceress from another dimension enlists the help of a man of our world to do battle against an evil sorcerer who has ruthlessly seized power in an effort to subjugate all dimensions. (Star Studded Comics can be purchased from Larry Herndon at 1830 Highland, Carrollton, Texas. 75006....Price 75¢.)

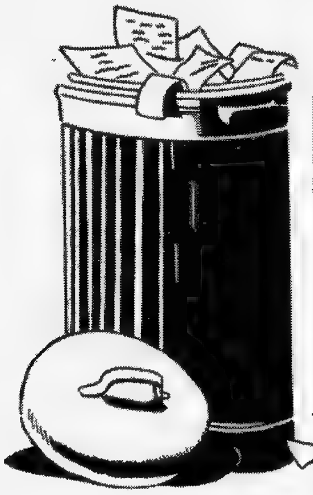
Dennis' favorite artists are Steve Ditko and Frank Frazetta. He believes that if you have seen their work, then there is no need for his explaining why he likes what they do.

Spider-man, when Steve Ditko was at the helm, rates as Dennis' favorite comic magazine. More recently, he dug The Blue Beetle. Although he was disapointed that, while it lasted, The Blue Beetle came out only four times a year.

His vote for best illustrated magazine went to what he termed, "A truly unique magazine".....Wally Wood's WITZEND.

Well fans, I hope this has answered many of your questions about Dennis. I've got some fantastic art, by him, lined up for future issues. You also won't want to miss his work appearing in this publication's companion zine "Champion". (See ad page.)

Fans of the fantastic Mr. Fujitake, can rejoice in the fact that Dennis is only one of many new talents in the 50th state. In fact, Dennis generously contributes his own time to help these fans out. We look for great things from all of them---and especially, from the talented DENNIS FUJITAKE!



From the Circular File

Alright fans! Here's your chance to boost or knock COMIC CRUSADER. Each issue, I'll print the most intelligent letters I receive.

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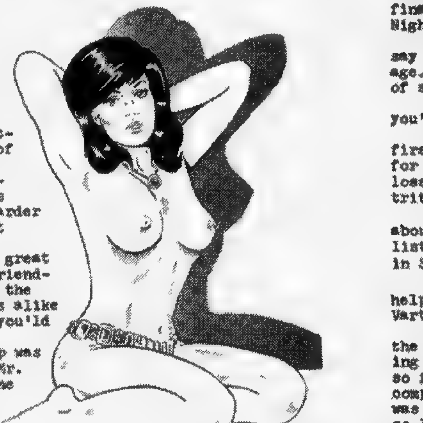
JACK HERBERGER
2616 Grove Avenue
Waukegan, Illinois. 60085

Comic Crusader #7 was a true Alley Award winning issue, for sure. Page after page of really great material. Something for everyone. I couldn't get over it! Every page exploding with great artwork. Every page bubbling with great writing. Just how are you and Cosgrove going to out-do this Con ish #7.........even match it!

As you can tell, I liked it! In Comic Chatter, you mentioned that the Lone Ranger and the Green Hornet were related. So right. I do believe though, that Dan Reid was Brit Reid's father. A few of the Hornet episodes mentioned that behind Dan Reid's desk, hanging on the wall, was a large portrait of a masked man on a great white stallion. Time after time, Dan would question his son Brit, about his playboy ways and why couldn't he be like the masked man who was always fighting crime. Near the end of the radio series, of the Hornet, old Dan Reid finally got his wish. Lying near death, with his son at his side. Brit Reid exposed himself to his failing father, as the Green Hornet! A true tear-jerker to the radio buff of yesteryear. Again, I thank you for the Magnificent Seven.

I THANK YOU JACK, FOR FILLING IN THE DETAILS OF THE LONE RANGER - GREEN HORNET RELATIONSHIP. I NEVER KNEW ABOUT THAT DEATH BED SCENE.

THOMAS HEGEMAN
R.D. Chatham, N.Y. 12037



Congrats on Comic Crusader #7. It far surpassed last year's con issue. I really liked the splitting up of the con into the many events that comprised it. Also the aboudance and quality of the photos, along with a lot of good art-work, made this one of the best issues of any fanzine I have read. Steve Fritz's report on the Detroit Con was a nice addition. Coverage of the New York Con is plentiful, but you have to look a bit harder for news and coverage of the smaller but equally interesting cons.

I think what really made the issue great was the way you managed to convey the friendliness of the whole affair. I attended the New York Con and found the fans and pros alike to be as friendly a bunch of people as you'ld want to meet.

The second part of the Mr. A. strip was interesting, altho' I don't agree with Mr. Ditko's philosophy. He seems to lack the 'rechute dispos' that was so evident in The Hawk and The Dove.

The most amusing thing, I think, was on your letter page. (much better in offset) I could see how SOME people might object to your Dejah Thoris pic in Champion #7, but to term John Fantucchio's cover on CC #6 indecent?... sheesh. Somebody has their foot on the Mayflower, that's for sure. I thought that it was the best cover the Comic Crusader has seen.

Also, before I forget, congratulations on your standings in the Fan Activity section of the Alley Awards.

I'M GLAD YOU ENJOYED THE ISSUE, TOM. AS FOR ME GETTING COVERAGE ON SMALLER CONS, THAT COULD PROVE FOLLY. FIRST, I'D RATHER GIVE AN IN DEPTH REPORT ON ONE CON, OR AT THE MOST TWO, THAN A POOR REPORT ON A NUMBER OF THEM. SECONDLY, I DO HAVE SPACE LIMITATIONS.
AS FOR PEOPLE OBJECTING TO JOHN'S COVER OR MY DEJAH THORIS (pictured above) ALL I CAN SAY IS...TOUGH! THE DEJAH DRAWING WAS AN ACCURATE PORTRAYAL OF THE WAY BORROUGHS DEPICTED HER. IN HIS MARTIAN SERIES, SHE RARELY WORE CLOTHES AND WHEN SHE DID WEAR SOMETHING, IT WAS ORNAMENTAL JEWELERY. PLUS THE FACT, I'M NOT HINDERED BY ANY CODE. I CAN DRAW WHAT I WANT, THE WAY I WANT. THE ONLY CODE I APPLY IS THE CODE OF GOOD TASTE.

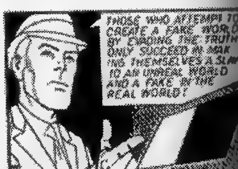
DAVE PUCKETT
Rural Route #2
Cave City, Kentucky. 42127

I especially like articles on Comic Cons, and Steve Fritz's, in CC #7, was one of the better short ones I've read. The Detroit Con seemed to represent everything which I've been trying to organize here in Kentucky for the last few years. Collecting-wise, both Ky. & Tennessee are really dead, but it seems that now a little interest is being stirred up. Especially in such larger cities as Louisville.

I showed CC #7, along with #6, to several comic-fans, right here in my area, and they too agreed that for the small 35¢ price, it was well worth the money. The question still arises as to how you can publish so many proffessionally printed pages, for such low prices. I suppose quantity compensates for that.

Steve Ditko's work was really great. It seems to have so much more flair in black and white, than his work in color. Let's hope you can acquire several more installments of Mr. A.

A suggestion, maybe? Every zine reprints something at one time or another, so why not go all the way, and obtain a few old FLASH GORDON Sunday pages for CC?


THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO CREATE A FAKE WORLD BY EVADING THE TRUTH ONLY SUCCEED IN MAKING THEMSELVES A SLAVE TO AN UNREAL WORLD AND A FAKE IN THE REAL WORLD!

Perhaps the biggest disappointment was in COMIC CHATTER, where you stated that the X-Men will be discontinued. To me, the stories were always rated between those of the FF and the Avengers, and it's a shame to see one of Marvel's oldest running titles dropped. While we're on the subject of Marvel, could the dropping of Digger and the Undertaker from Marvel's horror mags, be because of the pro-code trend? We all know how the C.C.A. is.

IT'S NICE TO HEAR YOU'RE TRYING TO ORGANIZE FANDOM IN YOUR AREA, DAVE. ESPECIALLY NOW, WHEN SUPER HERO COMICS ARE ON THE EBB.
AS FOR MY PUBLISHING SO MANY PROFESSIONALLY PRINTED PAGES AT SO LOW A COST; TO ME, THAT'S THE NAME OF THE GAME. I WANT TO GIVE COMIC FANS THE BEST MATERIAL FOR THE LOWEST COST POSSIBLE. IN SOME CASES I'VE INCURRED THE WRATH OF MANY FANS FOR REJECTING THEIR MATERIAL. BUT, AS I TOLD THEM, I WON'T ACCEPT ANY MATERIAL I WOULDN'T PAY 35¢ TO SEE MY-SELF.
I DON'T BELIEVE THE CODE HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE DROPPING OF DIGGER AND THE UNDERTAKER. THEY WERE TWO UNIMAGINATIVE CHARACTERS TO BEGIN WITH AND LENT NOTHING TO THE MAGAZINES.

GLENN BAKER
2065 Rock Springs Rd.
Decatur, Ill. 62521

After having received issue number 7 of the Comic Crusader, the Comic Convention issue, I'm sure glad I waited for it! It is the best issue of the CC since the last issue I bragged about!!!?? (which was issue #6.) The cover of no. 7 was very good and the little poem was the very thing to compliment the rest of the symbolism on the cover.

Your drawing of The Defender, in the upper left hand corner of the first page, is very good. Martin, I really think that you've got your style perfected, and I really like it. William Black's Dr. Strange was very, very, good! Among the also like list of art is: Steve Fritz's Capt. Marvel; Donna's Galactus; your Batman; Wein's Shining Knight; Fantucchio's Deadman was beautiful, as most of his work is; and I just can't go any further without mentioning Steranko's SHIELD; and that final section of Vampirella (that one went down real easy); with Nightmaster and Green Arrow.

Since I was unfortunate to miss your first Con issue, all I can say is that it couldn't have been any better than this issue's coverage. Speaking of coverage, that was also good and have you ever thought of starting a news team? (Goodnight, Martin: Goodnight, Bob?)

I like the changes you've given to CC, and the best part is that you're keeping the price down where I can afford it. Many thanks!

Mr. Steve Ditko's "Mr. A." strip was a fitting conclusion to the first segment, so be sure to convey this fan's most heartfelt thanks for this superb strip. I said in my first letter to you, that I'm at a loss for words to describe him and I'm still trying. It's a little bit trite, but how 'bout—great and stupendous.

It's a good thing Comic Chatter is still around, or I'd never about where to order Steranko's "TALON". I've got this on my 'must' list and I'm going to order one. Not only will I get to indulge myself in Steranko's art, but this will fast become a collector's item.

I really appreciated the Con photo's because they were a great help for this small collector. I guess there really is an Irene Vartanoff!

I know this letter is rather lengthly, but so was CC and it was the best put out yet, BUT--I've acquired this ridiculous habit of pointing out things that I don't like and this issue's "gripes" from me were so few, that I thought I was to be doomed to not having anything to complain about. But one thing just about drove me up a wall and that was the overuse of "damn." Surely your vocabulary isn't lacking any-so let's watch that. (I'll be waiting to see if I don't get an editorial comment on that statement.) Overall, I'd say it was a good issue and that it was your best so far. Thanks for your time!

WELL GLEN, TO START OFF, I NEVER SAID "DAMN". IT WAS A DIRECT QUOTE FROM JAMES WARREN AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO EDIT A DIRECT QUOTE. BUT YOU CAN BE DAMNED CERTAIN I'LL WATCH THAT IN THE FUTURE---DAMMIT!

CHAMPION.....NO.7

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featuring CREEPY + EERIE artist Wm Black.

PARAGON # 2 spotlights a new Wm. BLACK strip.. SYNESTHESIA, THE GIRL FROM LSD!!..the conclusion of the STARMASTER epic, BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25th CENTURY art and article by Stu Smith, Martin Greim on THE CRIMSON AVENGER...ROGER CORMAN'S THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM with photos of VINCENT PRICE AND BARBARA STEELE! Over 40 pages, photo off-set, wrap-around, mailed flat in envelope! COLOR COVER!!

*COMIC CRUSADER EDITOR'S NOTE:

The only place you can get a free "PARAGON" poster is through this ad. (Mark orders to Paragon...Dept CC8.) These posters are printed on heavy stock paper and will be mailed seperately in a mailing tube. SEND 25¢ HANDLING CHARGE!!! If you order issues 1 & 2 you'll get two different posters. I can't recomend this publication enough. It's new and different and well worth the money.

[illegible] MANUGIAN
[illegible] Aldrich Rd.
[illegible] Bridgewater, Mass. 02379

The very first thing I must say about Comic Crusader #7 has to do with the letters pages, oddly enough. All the letters were interesting, but one comment instantly came to my attention. I can't see how you could print the "pan" letters unless the person who wrote it had extremely bad taste, [illegible] with Comic Crusader the goal of perfection has been reached since [illegible] issue. Try as I may, I could not find one imperfect sylable in issue [illegible] What I've been trying to put accross, is that Comic Crusader is the [illegible] zine around and is actually PERFECT.

#7's cover was the most original cover I have ever seen on ANY zine. [illegible] more than made up for the lateness of the Comic Crusader. (I feel you are 100% correct in your idea to skip deadlines, Marty! Take your time and [illegible] and carefully put together every issue of C.C.)

The photos placed throughout the ish was a very enlightening and entertaining gesture. Your Flash Gordon painting reprint was very attractive; I can see why even Al Williamson enjoyed it.

Every piece of art was beautiful as usual. And the articles were just as good as the art. You are also very, VERY lucky to be such a good friend [illegible] Steranko. His Nick Fury sketch was his most interesting illo since a certain fanzine printed a pic of a Christmas card he had sent to the editor of that zine.

The "Keynote Speech" of Gil Kane was the most striking and true article I have ever read. Mr. Kane really knows what he's talking about! If men who felt as Gil does, ran the publishing companies, comics would never die out.

The Detroit Con review was very entertaining. It was a gloriously detailed account of the many events of the huge con.

Bill Wilson's interview was revealing. I had never heard of him before C.C. #7, but now I'm already sending for his zine.

Of course Mr. A. was magnificant; the second half was as great as the first. Comic Chatter was the first item I went to when I first looked at C.C. #7, since it is very informing. I am truly sad that X-MEN will no longer grace the stands.

And finally, the back cover........"AWWWWW!!!" was the first word of exclamation that leaped into my mind, when I saw it. I was glad to see that somebody besides me cared for the Prisoner, and was surprised to see that the artist (WHO?) had so completely captured the TV scenes in his drawing. I just LOVED the back cover!

Thanks TONS for a huge magazine of relaxing, entertaining reading enjoyment, Martin L. Greim!!!!

I'M A PRISONER FAN TOO, RICK. THE ARTIST FOR THAT BACK COVER, WAS ANTHONY [illegible]. I FLIPPED WHEN I SAW IT FOR THE FIRST TIME TOO. HE CAPTURED THE [illegible] FLAVOR OF THE SHOW IN THAT DRAWING.

ROBERT SCHOENFELD (Editor of Gosh Wow)
9516 Minerva
St. Louis, Mo. 63114

The 7th Comic Crusader arrived today and was readily digested... and, having a bit of spare time (he said, pushing a couple of dozen unanswered letters asside) I thought I'd drop you a few lines of comment.

Rick's cover was quite striking. Though the theme is hardly new, it's one that can scarcely be made too frequently. I'm consistantly amazed at the progress Rick's art has made over the years. I was looking over some of the work he had brought to the con in July and it's downright fantastic. I'm looking forward to seeing his first strip for DC.

Another artist of considerable merit is William Black, whose Doc Strange pic, on the contents page is really something. That smooth, even line work is quite impressive. I'd like to see what he could do turned loose on a cover illustration. I've seen his work in the Warren books, of course, but I don't find it anywhere near as impressive or dramatic as this one illo.

Your convention report is just the sort of thing that fandom is needing. Comicdom, more often than not, seems to concerned with the building of collections--the wheeling and dealing in old books--than in the personalities and the individuals who create these books. Reports such as yours, re-instill my enthusiasm in fandom.

Al Bradford's article on the underground comics makes me damned sorry that I missed the panel. I would have loved to have met Rick Griffin--I have nothing but respect for his talents. If you've ever seen some of the posters he turned out during the peak of the San Francisco ball-room dances, you know what a brilliant cartoonist he is. By the way, the D.A. Latimer he mentioned, is one of the editors of the East Village Other and a long-time comics fan. He is responsible for what we consider "underground comics".

I don't know if I'd entirely go along with Al's definition of what constitutes an underground comic strip. I don't think that it has so much to do with the material being "unacceptable" to the masses as simply being unknown to them. Basically, they tend to deal in subjects once considered taboo--and they do so with a relish and freedom that can offend even those who thought themselves liberally minded. If nothing else, they frequently have the effect of causing one to take stock of his own attitudes and question his own sensibilities. Often their goal would seem to be nothing but grossing-out the reader and at times the grizzliness comes on so strong that they become somewhat self-parodies. On the other hand, there are cartoonists who I would label more "avant garde" than underground. Their work is generally more well-known but frequently "above the head" of the average reader. I would include in this catagory people like Robert Crumb and Vaughn Bode and George Metzger. And, if I were to categorize, I would perhaps establish a 3rd criterion--the humorists. These cartoonists are less concerned with getting some point or moral across, and chiefly are concerned with making the reader laugh--often to the point of ridiculing their own values. In this catagory are Gilbert Shelton (whose "notorious furry freak-brothers" and Wonder Wart-Hog are underground classics) and Jay Lynch.

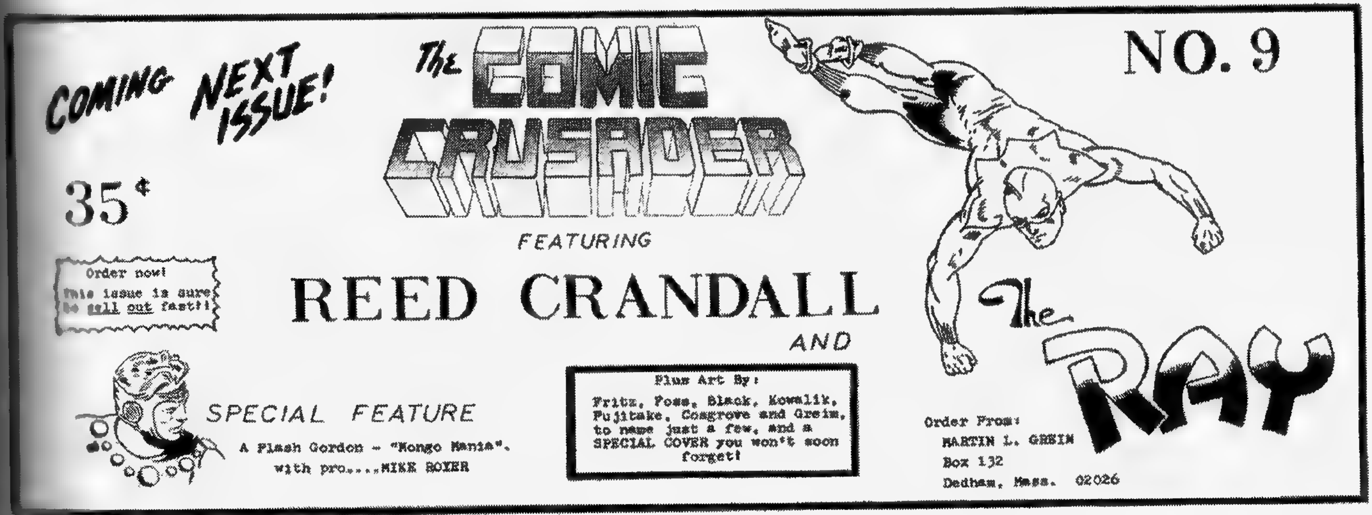
In short, the underground comic artists cannot really be pinned down and lumped together. They are as diverse as the human imagination and their work runs the gamut from the very profound to the absurd. It is for each person to choose what he prefers...

Jim Warren is still a bit of a paradox to me. After meeting him on two occassions and spending no small amount of time with him, I can't decide if he's a blow-hard or an extremely intelligent man. When he makes the statement that he hates mediocrity, I tend to burst out laughing...but his sincerity cannot be denied. He freely admits that his sole motivating force is to make money...by doing something he enjoys...and trying to do it well. Creepy and Eerie are scarcely what I would call great works of comic art, and yet it may just be that he has achieved that median point between pure commercialization and pure art--that is, taking each as far as possible, without losing the other.

Warren, as your report points out, is as quick with the slashing out, when you've said or done something that angered him, as he is with a hand if he thinks you need help. I know; I've experienced both in full measure. We argued at length and discussed everything from Vietnam and morality to Lenny Bruce (from whom he steals much of his humorous material) and comics. His above-board honesty can be as immediately put-offish as the most gross of the underground comics, but one cannot help but respect a man with that attitude. When he starts handing out praise, he tends to gush, but he can be equally gushing in his criticism and he knows what he wants (if not what's good...) And, though he pays his people poorly, I doubt seriously whether any other publisher in the business has the respect for his people that Warren has.

I'm very much a Ditko fan, but I dislike Mr. A. vehimently. I know what Ditko tries to do with Mr. A., but I simply do not agree with his methods.

A poor back cover...But, as a whole, easily your finest issue to date. Each issue should be an improvement over the previous ones and in that light, I think you've been quite successful.



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THE HEAP

HISTORY'S HEROES

WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS..?

ARTICLE..... TOM FAGAN

ART..... MARTIN GREIM

No more tragic figure ever lumbered from the pages of comic book history than---THE HEAP. Neither man, nor plant, a horrifying entity of nature that cruel fate directed in aimless search for a past no longer existing and a present that could not accept him.

A lonely one--The Heap. Turned out of the world of men, doomed to wander. A once-burning intellect, with a strong will to live, yet unable to understand why!

Clothed in mystery of swampland and death, The Heap was the strangest of all, in comic book chronicles. One to be always remembered by those who followed his strange saga, chronicled in now-yellowing pages of a Hillman Periodicals series.

The book was AIR FIGHTERS COMICS, Vol. 1, No.3, December, 1942, breeding grounds for such memorable characters as Airboy, Black Angel, Flying Dutchman, Bald Eagle, Iron Ace and Sky Wolf, a fighting champion who wore the headdress of a white wolf, as his battle symbol.

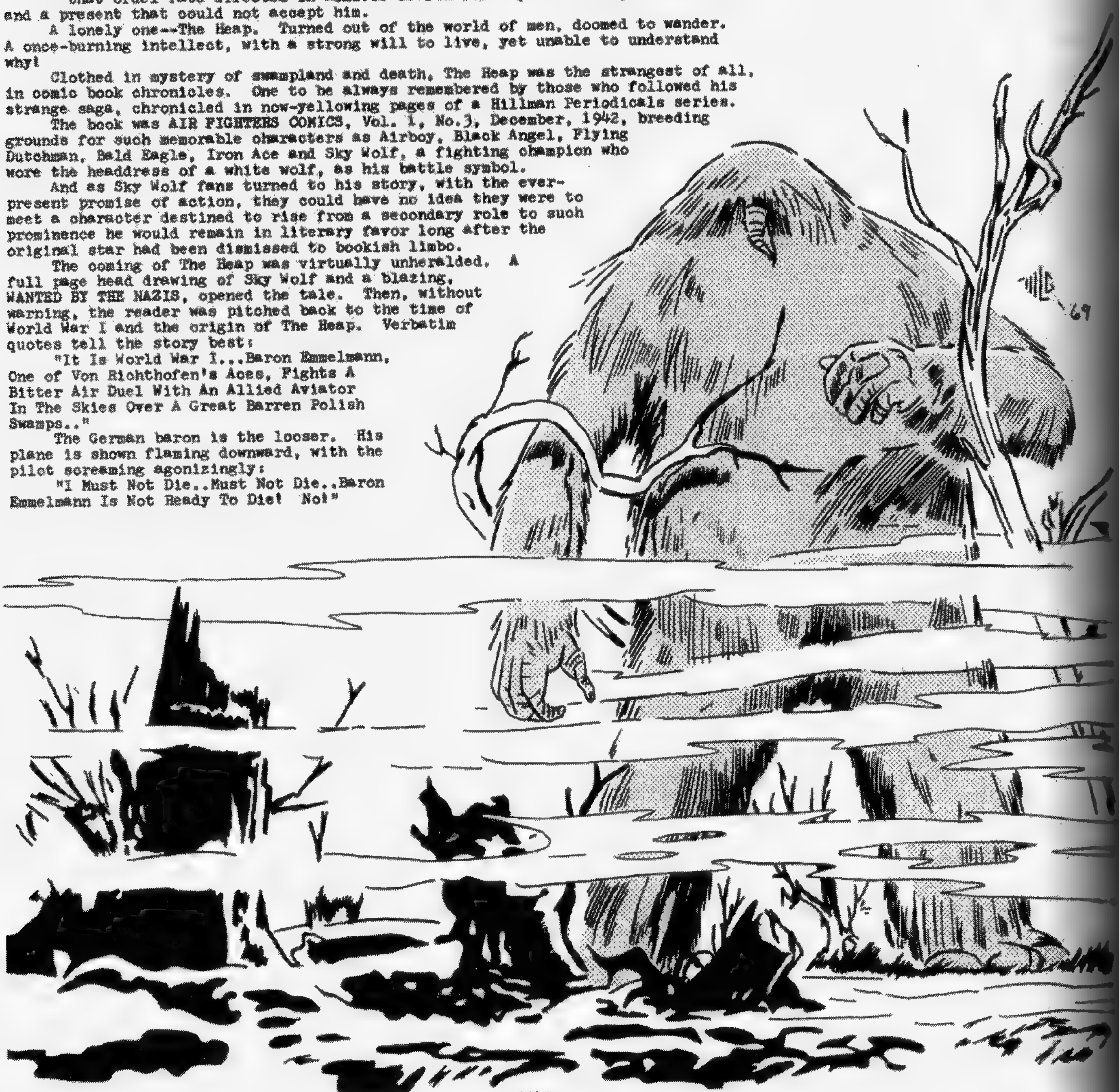
And as Sky Wolf fans turned to his story, with the ever-present promise of action, they could have no idea they were to meet a character destined to rise from a secondary role to such prominence he would remain in literary favor long after the original star had been dismissed to bookish limbo.

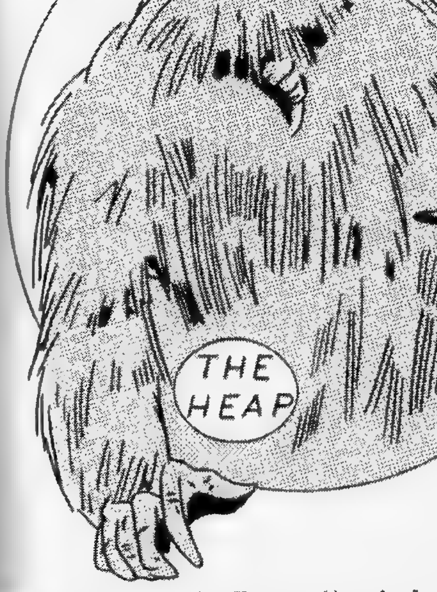
The coming of The Heap was virtually unheralded. A full page head drawing of Sky Wolf and a blazing, WANTED BY THE NAZIS, opened the tale. Then, without warning, the reader was pitched back to the time of World War I and the origin of The Heap. Verbatim quotes tell the story best:

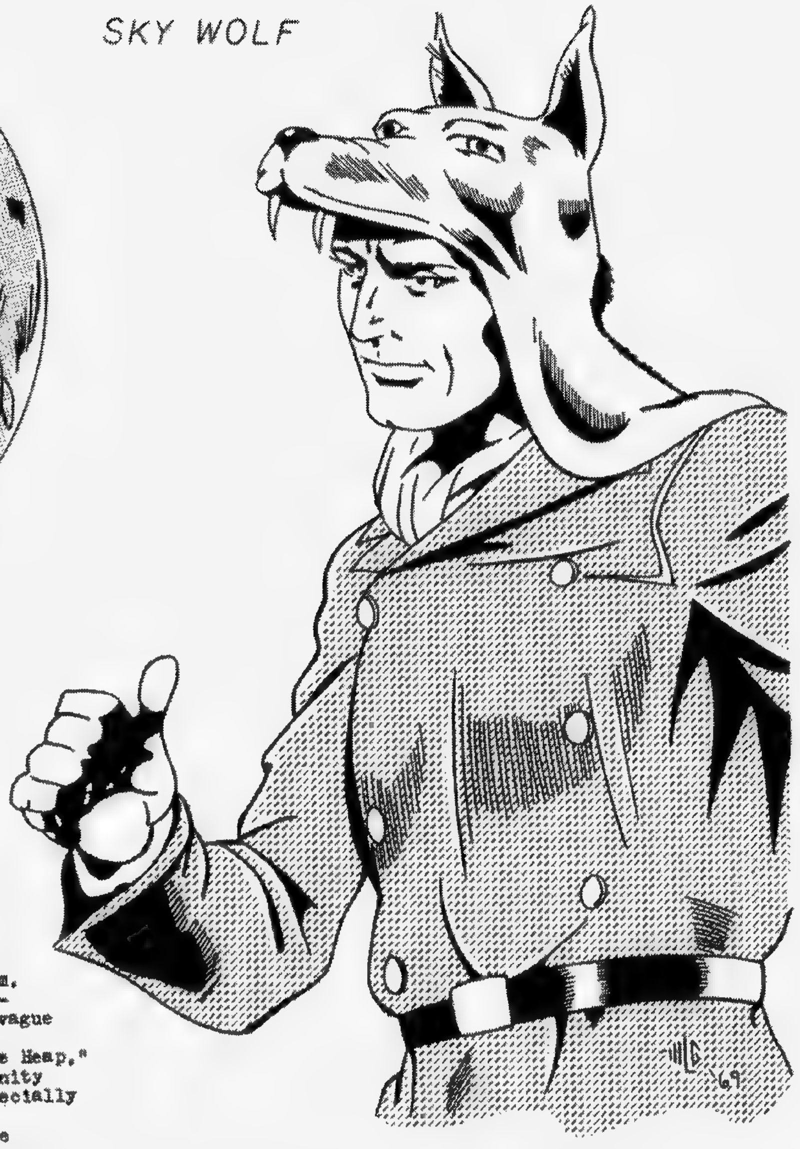
"It Is World War I...Baron Emmelmann, One of Von Richthofen's Aces, Fights A Bitter Air Duel With An Allied Aviator In The Skies Over A Great Barren Polish Swamps.."

The German baron is the looser. His plane is shown flaming downward, with the pilot screaming agonizingly:

"I Must Not Die..Must Not Die..Baron Emmelmann Is Not Ready To Die! No!"







A downed plane in flames; its single occupant thrown clear to lie sprawled face down in suffocating mulch. The caption reads:

"Emmelmann Crashes In The Lonely Swamp.. The Body Is Thrown Clear Of The Plane And Lies Silently In The Slime..It Merges With The Other Swampy Vegitation."

Gradually a metamorphsis takes place. For:

"Baron Emmelmann's Will To Live Has Been A Powerful Force..Time Passes..And Brings An Unearthly Transformation That Has Drawn Its Oxygen And From The Vegetation..A Fantastic HEAP Is Neither Animal Nor Man!"

It is a white shaggy form that gradually rises to its feet. Little is left to the human form, only a remaining mocking half image. The figure resembles a moss-covered cyprus tree, with a twisted vague shape of a man.

An unsuspecting sheep sidles up to "the strange Heap," and meets death; for this grisly caricature of humanity needs oxygen..It will draw it in quantity, but especially from the blood vessels of animal or Man."

Three more panels show the white-colored figure moving in constant search for prey. "The Heap Is Supreme Master Of His Primeval Domain.."

So he remains until 1942, when the reader is suddenly snatched into the present and World War II. In Rodz, a small Polish town near the great swamp, all the townspeople are to be executed because of the death of one Gestapo chieftain.

Here the story was touching on actuall German practice. Lidice, one European town that had defied its German captors, was the scene of mass killings and destruction so complete, and the grounds were leveled and it was if the town had never been.

World War II was not pleasant and comic books mirrored its horror. Col. Von Tundra, who in an earlier encounter with Sky Wolf had been left a "Half-man" with metal remaining parts of his body shot away in the meeting, has ordered the public execution.

Sky Wolf and his fighting trio of teammates, arrive in an attempt to prevent the barbarism. In an air fight that follows, Von Tundra crashes into the swamp occupied by the Heap.

German screams of terror awaken half memories in the mind of the Heap and Von Tundra is carried underarm, ignominiously, into Rodz by the creature. Here the Germans discover the Heap's fondness for blood and decide to execute the Polish townspeople by turning them over to the shaggy monster.

Sky Wolf and crew again reunited, prepare a second raid to stop the execution. With machine guns blazing their planes rain death down on the town square. In the following confusion, the Heap breaks restraining chains, put on him by the Germans. His rush at another intended victim is cut short by a well-placed bomb, dropped by the Wolf.

But The Heap returned in Air Fighters Comics, June of 1943. As the bomb fell, the creature tripped and fell with the explosive striking ahead of its path. The resulting blast was upward, not harming the behemoth.

Alone, the Heap lurched on until he came to a German airfield. The sight of a plane raised another long forgotten memory. A terrified Nazi pilot is forced to take the Heap skyward and discovers once airborne, the Heap is controlling the flight of the ship.

The pilot is tossed to his death from the plane and the Heap begins a systematic pillaging of air fields. Making no distinction between Allied or Axis bases, the Heap soon becomes a feared menace to both sides.

It is Sky Wolf who meets the Heap in aerial combat. The skill of the creature causes his doughty opponent to comment, "Amazing!! The Heap Handles His Plane Like He's Flown All His Life!" Nevertheless, the Heap, with fire spitting from his commandeered planes engine, is supposedly sent to his end.

But the drama of this formless monstrosity has only begun. In the May, 1946 issue, with Air Fighters Comics having changed its name to Airboy Comics, the Heap returns this time to America. The strip is still Sky Wolf's, but more and more the "prank of nature" is emerging as a major character.

Professor Herman Kringle, a noted American zoologist, has had a large crate secretly smuggled into the country. Inside, is the dead husk of the former German flier.

Injecting a powerful serum into the lifeless figure, the professor is interrupted by his wife, Elizabeth, who demands to know what he is doing. And gladly the professor, dominated unmercifully for many years by his spouse, shows her, saying:

"You Wretched Woman! My Vengence Has FINALLY Come!" Two formless hands of mossy white reach out for the woman. "I Have Given You Life," avows the professor to the Heap, "And You Will Be My Strength And Courage In Return---!

Strongarm tactics by Professor Kringle and the enslaved Heap, result in newspaper headlines. Sky Wolf, in a fight aboard a stolen "Mars" flying boat, sets fire to the aircraft. The plane explodes in mid-air supposedly ending the career of the mad professor and the creature to whom he gave new life.

But, it was far from the end. Airboy Comics of November, 1946, not only boasted a Sky Wolf story, but The Heap, who is now brown in color, had by now been established in a strip of his own. Planes continued to hold a fascination for the creature and he was attracted to Rickie Wood, owner of a small model Nazi plane.

It was a curious friendship, with the boy supplying the monster with baskets of meat and vegetables. And Rickie Wood was unaware of why the monster liked him, never realizing the connection between the creature and the model plane.

In the story that developed, The Heap is captured by an unscrupulous carnival owner. Bound with heavy ropes, the creature is placed on public display on a side-show platform. Rickie realizes the danger the carnival is in, once The Heap decides to exert his strength. He rushes to cut the monster loose, just as The Heap snaps the ropes like twine. However, tragedy is averted as monster follows boy to safety.

By the February, 1947, issue of Airboy Comics, Rickie Wood now understands that for some reason it is his model planes that attract The Heap. He has made a model of Airboy's famous plane, Birdie, hoping to use it to lure The Heap "Into The Open For The Police!" For a person previously feeding The Heap, it is a strange attitude of friendship displayed by the boy.

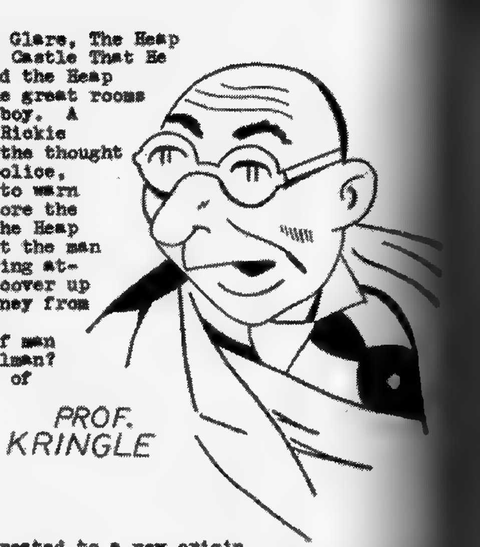
Stranger though, is the quirk of fate that leads Rickie Wood into being buried alive with a string of stolen pearls about his neck. And the necklace is the Von Emmelman pearls taken from a German castle by an American soldier.

Within the casket, Rickie manages the model of Birdie, by remote control. The circling plane model attracts the attention of The Heap, who tears at the soil to free his young friend.

Further circumstances lead The Heap and Rickie to the pearl thieves. "With Backbreaking Force The Two Men Are Hurled To The Ground...And From His Victums The Heap Snatches The Von Emmelman Pearls!"

Fleeing, The Heap hides in a secluded woodland glen. "Fierce Eyes Study The Pearls - And Somewhere In The Dark Regions Of His Mind, He Realizes That They Belong To Him!..The Last Remaining Von Emmelman!!!"

Fragments of the past continue to turn up to haunt The Heap. In the August, 1947, edition of Airboy Comics, it is nothing less than the Von Emmelman castle itself, transported stone by stone, from its native Poland, to be rebuilt in its entirety in America.



"With Burning Glare, The Heap Now Recognizes The Castle That He Knew So Well!" And the Heap lumbers through the great rooms that he knew as a boy. A study in pathos. Rickie Woods, still with the thought of summoning the police, enters the castle to warn those inside. Before the story concludes, The Heap commits murder, but the man killed, is a coniving attorney seeking to cover up embezzlement of money from the castle owner.

What manner of man was Baron Von Emmelman? From Airboy Comics of October, 1947, we learn he was:

"An Ardent Killer, A Professional Soldier, Whose Only Two Loves Are His Country And War!"

We are also treated to a new origin story of The Heap; this one involving the Gods themselves. A council meeting has been called by Jupiter himself.

It is Ceres, Goddess of the Soil, who speaks of her anger with the Gods of the animal kingdom and "their mighty airs." Mars, the War-God, in particular is the focal point of Ceres' displeasure.

Avows Ceres, "Were I Given An Opportunity To Place One Of My Subjects Among Men And Be Allowed To Shape Its Destiny, I Could Undo Some Of The Evil YOU Foment On Earth!" Her wrath is met with a smile by Mars.

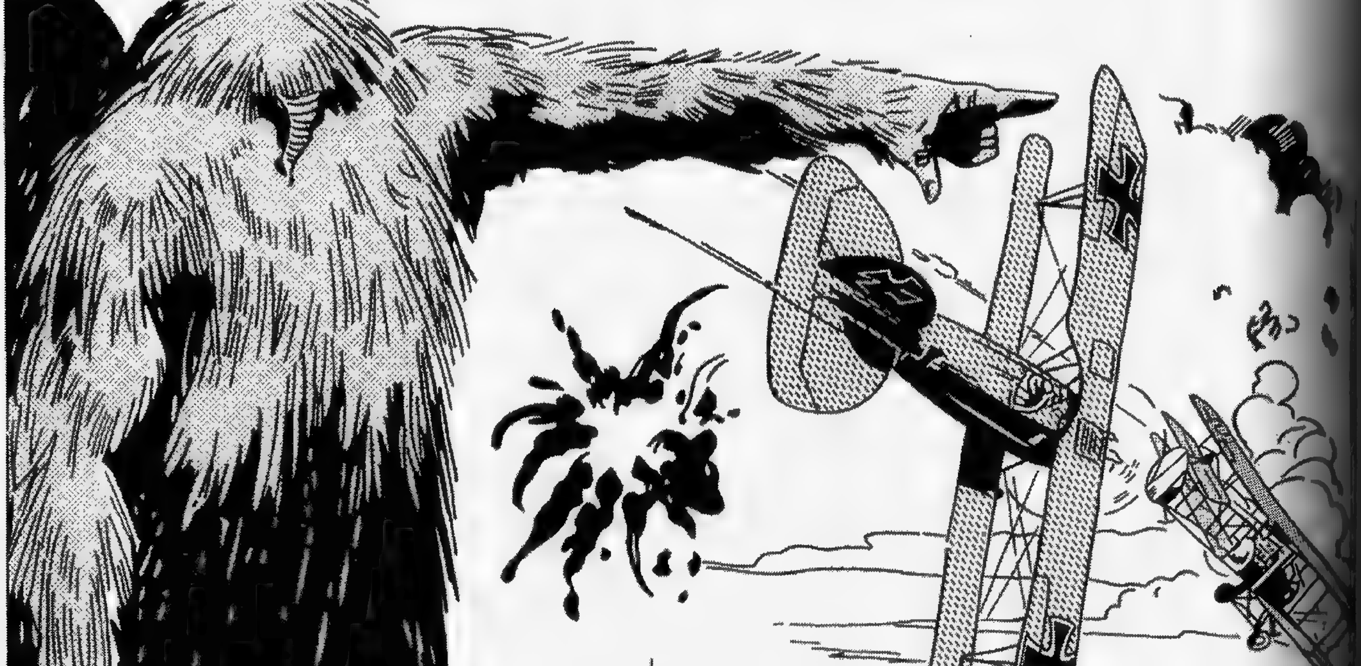
Jupiter decrees Ceres shall have the opportunity to shape destiny with one of her subjects. As the Gods watch, a tableau unfolds below on earth. It is the aerial combat between Von Emmelman and the British pilot of World War I.

Again the German craft crashes to swampland below and Von Emmelman is claimed by marshy growth. "But He Is Conceived In Evil!" exclaims Ceres, "How Can I Use His Body For Good?"

"Here Is Your Test," declairs Jupiter, "If You Do Mould This Man Of Evil Into A Thing To Follow The Laws of Nature, And Bring Good to EARTH, Then You Shall Prove Mars Is Wrong!"

The answer..."It SHALL BE DONE, as My Name Is CERES, GODDESS OF THE EARTH!"

With Ceres watching on, the years span the decades, until 1942 when at the bidding of the goddess, the massive Heap arises "To Walk In The Animal Kingdom And Bring It The Good Of Nature."



The story line continues, leaving out any connection between The Heap and Sky-Wolf, who has long since departed from the Hillman annals. No mention is made of the creature's lust for blood. Now, he obtains sustenance and strength from the soil alone.

In the story, the Nazi model plane, owned by Rickie [illegible], is destroyed. Ceres believes the destruction of the model has freed The Heap's mind from the hatreds and tools of war. "And He Will Now Be A Thing Of Nature And [illegible] In Man's World! WATCH HIM WELL!"

Ceres and Mars again contested for the loyalty of The Heap in the November, 1947 edition of Airboy Comics. As a test of faith, the creature is set on the withering hot sands of the Iranian Desert.

The wager is that Mars wins his way if the Heap destroys the single irrigation system, that the desert people survive on. If he wins, Mars will have desert warfare "rage on earth." Ceres, if she is successful in guiding The Heap out of the desert in safety, has the promise that the War-God will never again interfere in The Heap's destiny. The gentle goddess is successful. Her words:

"Graze In Peace, O'Heap! You Have Earned Your Freedom Well, And You Will Stay Forever In My Care!"

But peace was not for The Heap. And Ceres was not at his side in the November, 1948, issue of Airboy Comics. Events that transpired as far back as 1600, in the "Swamp of Wasu" in Poland, would have their effect three centuries later.

The swamp itself held a story. A feared, cruel warrior leader---"The Iron Duke of Galicia"---much like his Nazi counterparts in World War II, ordered the complete destruction of the Village of Wasu.

"To The Last Man, Woman And Child! There Shall Be No Descendants Of This Rabble!"

The order was carried out with even infants being put to the sword. Fire leveled homes and Wasu was left to the strong tangled swamp-vines that encroached until the swamp reclaimed its own.

"And Superstition, Too, Came To Live In That Awful Swamp..." Men whispered fearfully of the ghosts of murdered babies of Wasu.

Again it is 1917 and again Von Emmelman's plane crashes into the great swamp. But it is not Ceres watching over him this time; it is elfin ghost figures of murdered children, tending the creature that had once been a man--this blend of two kingdoms of nature--The Heap.

Now the year is 1943, and deserters from Hitler's armies come to dwell in the swamp, preying on innocent travelers from its dark depths. Among them is their leader, the direct descendant of the infamous Iron Duke.

It is the ghost babies that lead The Heap to the hiding place of the evil men, the decaying ruins of a tower. Sensing the evil within, The Heap calls on his power to command all growing things. Vines close about the tower, crushing it and bringing death to those inside. Wasu has been avenged!

For a time Mother Nature herself guided the path of The Heap. But the Man-Vegetable was fated to continue on alone. A story with The Heap as a force of good appeared in the January 1950 issue of Airboy Comics.

Again the swampland and its legends were the setting. Young children were entranced by the tales of an old man of the village, who told of "Not Only The Little People...(but) The Big One, Tall As A Tree, Who Talks With The Things That Grow!!"

Fantasy has a way of becoming fact. War descended in hellish fury and the youthful listeners fled into the hills. Exhausted, they are carried to further safety by Nature's most uncanny creation--The Heap.

Deciding to strike back, the children sabotage German supply trucks and equipment, obtaining food, tools and clothing, to continue living in the hills. Superstitous people attribute their exploits as work of "the little people."

And the children vow never to leave the protection of the mountain for "THE BELOW!!...No! Down In THE BELOW There Isn't Any Love Or Kindness...Only War And Hate!"

But there comes a time when trucks stop coming through the valley. The children realize the war must be over, but they are still reluctant to venture again to the world of men. Hunger finally forces them to descend the mountainside.

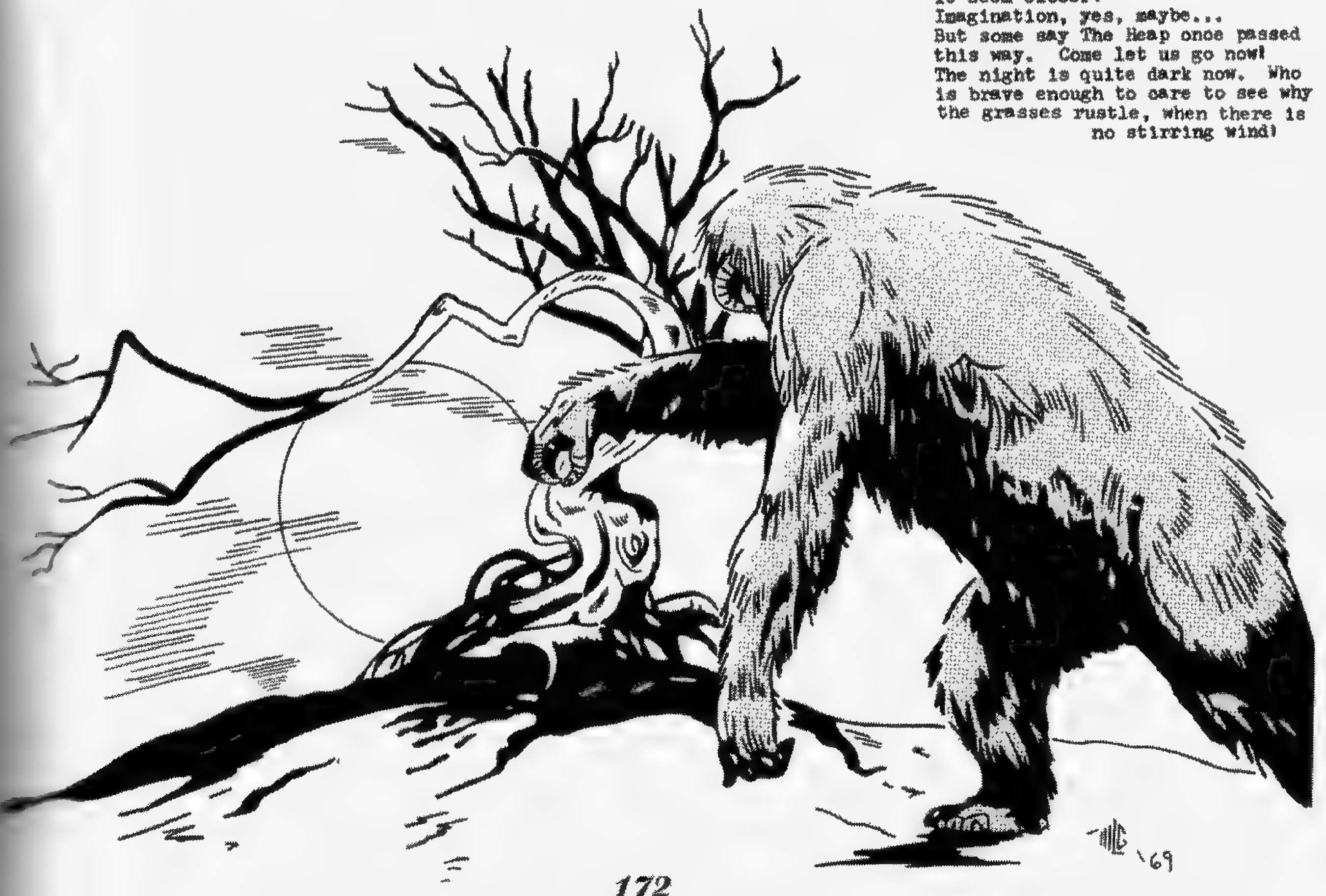
Whereupon they begin stealing food and cattle. Fearful Polish farmers are convinced the little people now intend to harass their village. Through the machinations of a kindly schoolmaster and The Heap, the children are reconciled to the ways of useful citizens, taking their own rightful place in the world.

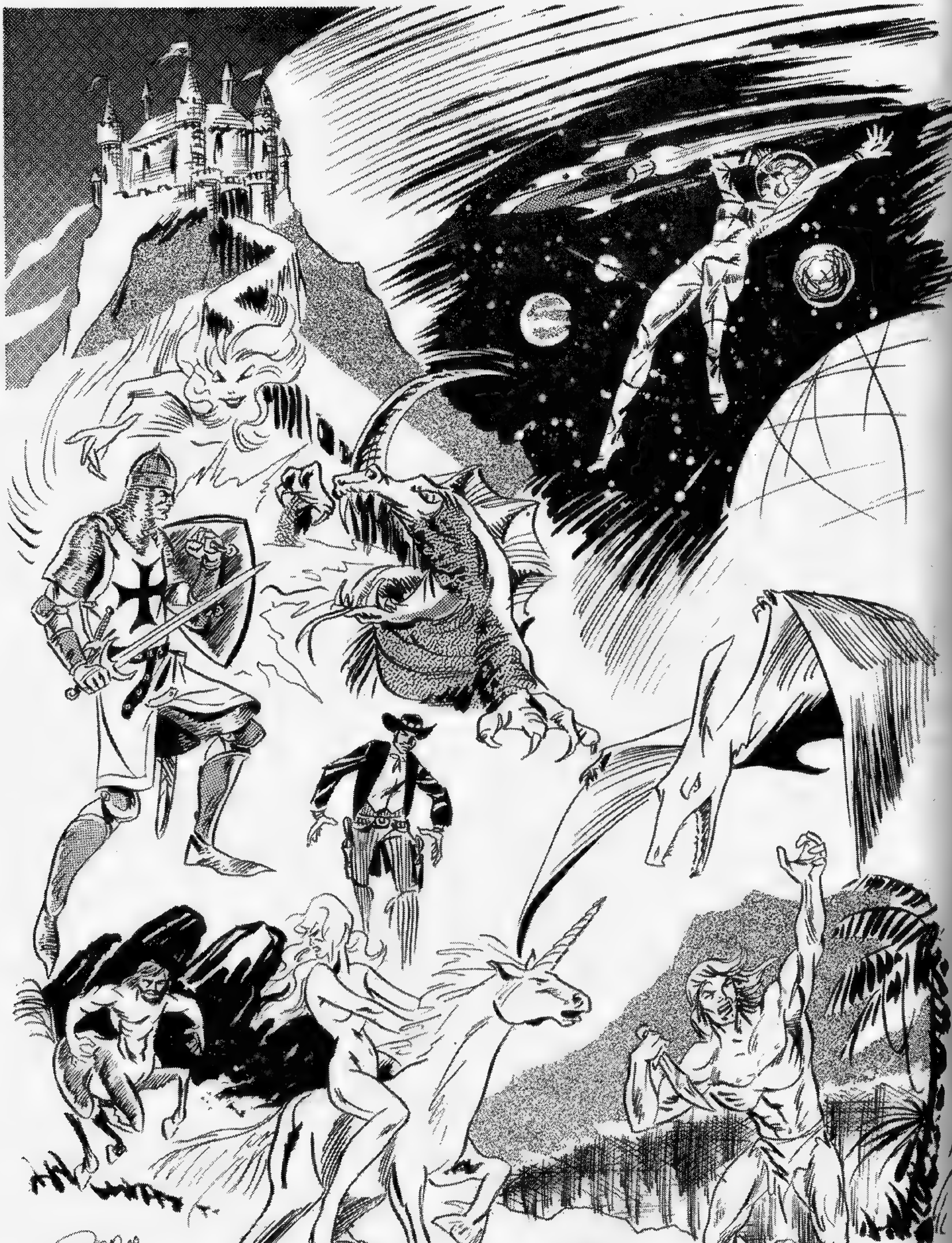
But for The Heap there would never be a rightful place. He was one of Nature's doomed. From a human life that knew the joys of machined flight, he was sentenced to wander earthbound the rest of his days.

Out there, he wanders, still even now. Warm rains, cutting winds, cold snows--all part of passing seasons. A legacy of life is his; a legacy of hope is denied him.

A barren hillside. A gnarled tree silhouetted against the skyline. In the gathering dusk, one's eyes play strange tricks.

Does that tree seem to move? Does it seem closer?
Imagination, yes, maybe...
But some say The Heap once passed this way. Come let us go now!
The night is quite dark now. Who is brave enough to care to see why the grasses rustle, when there is no stirring wind!

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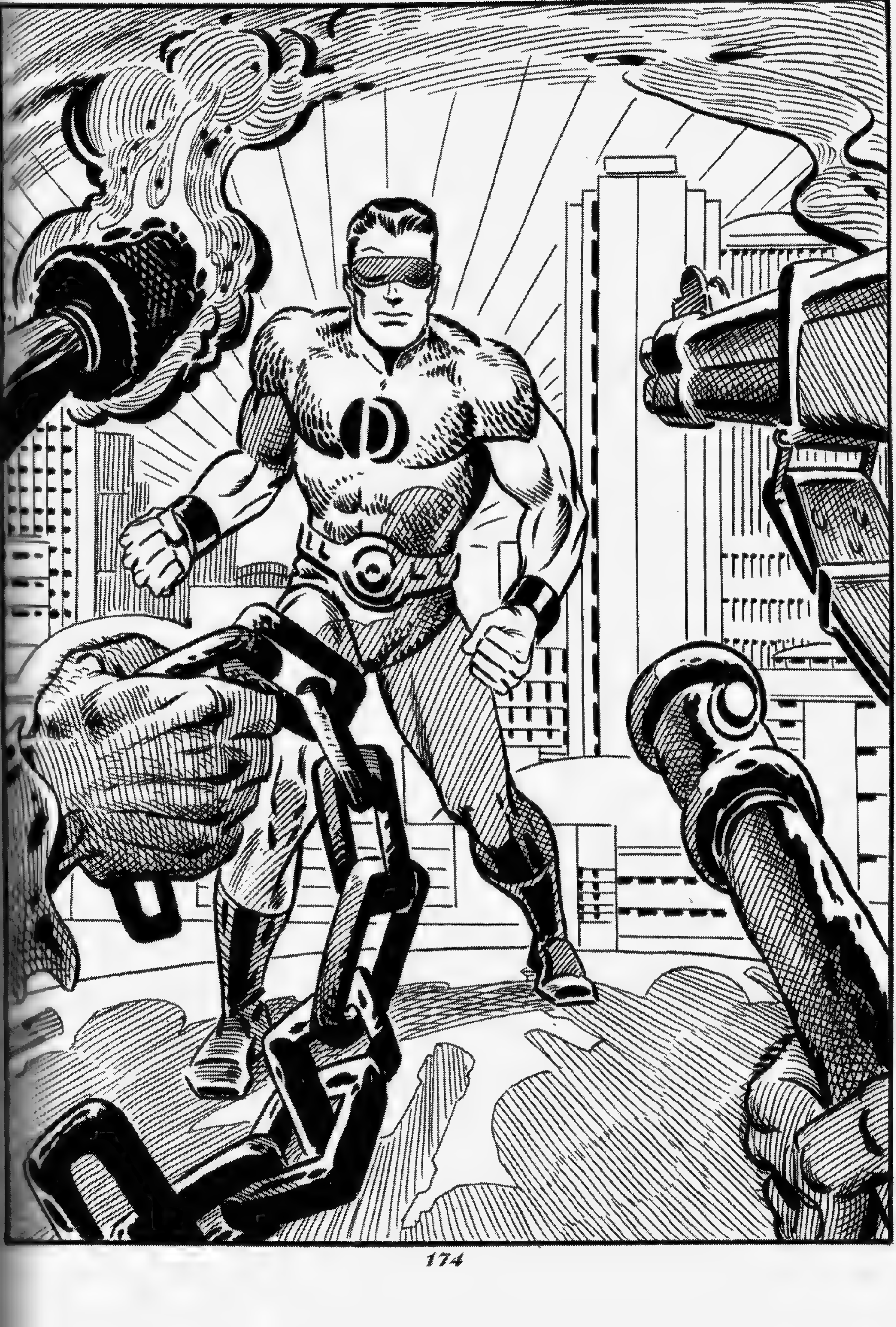
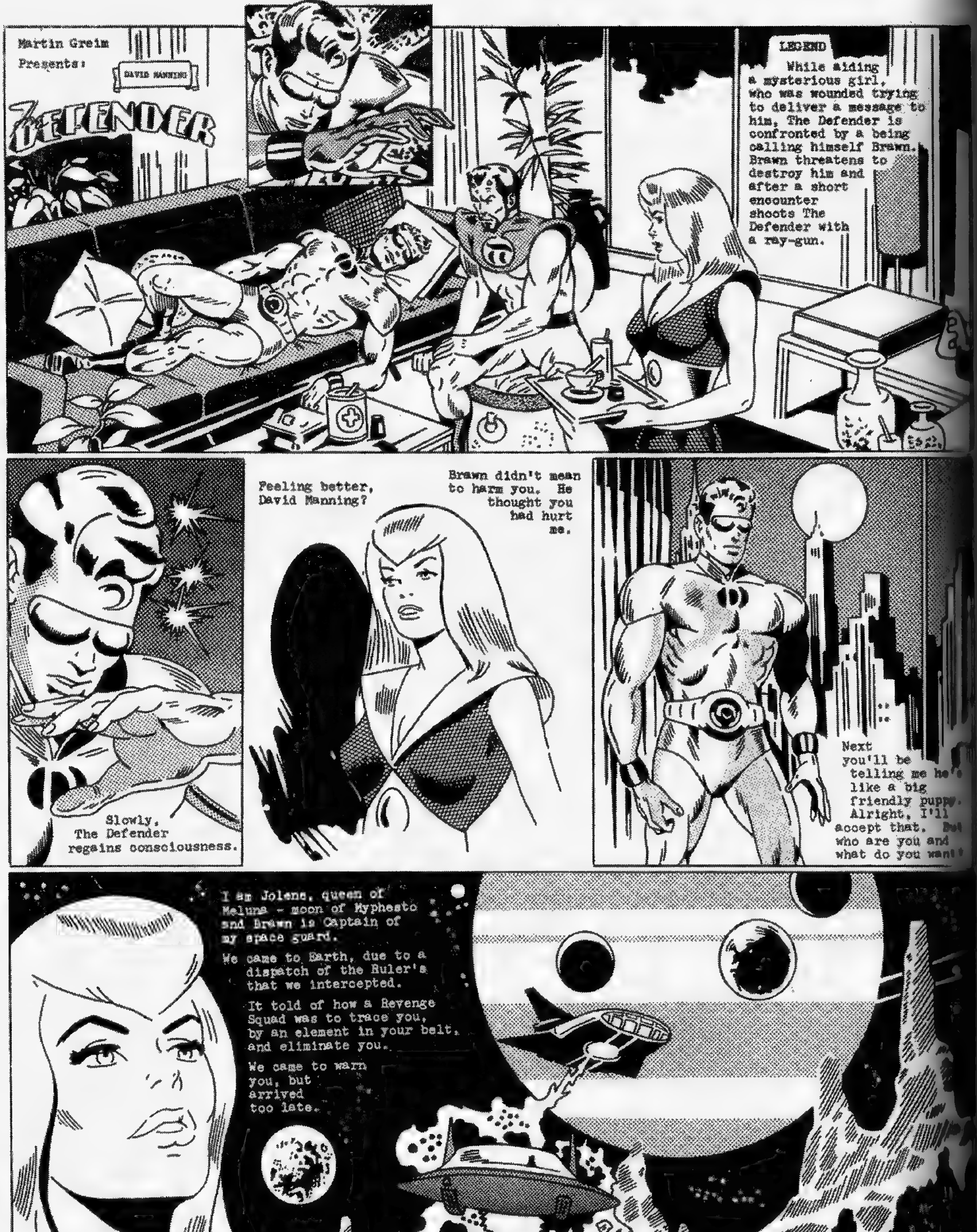
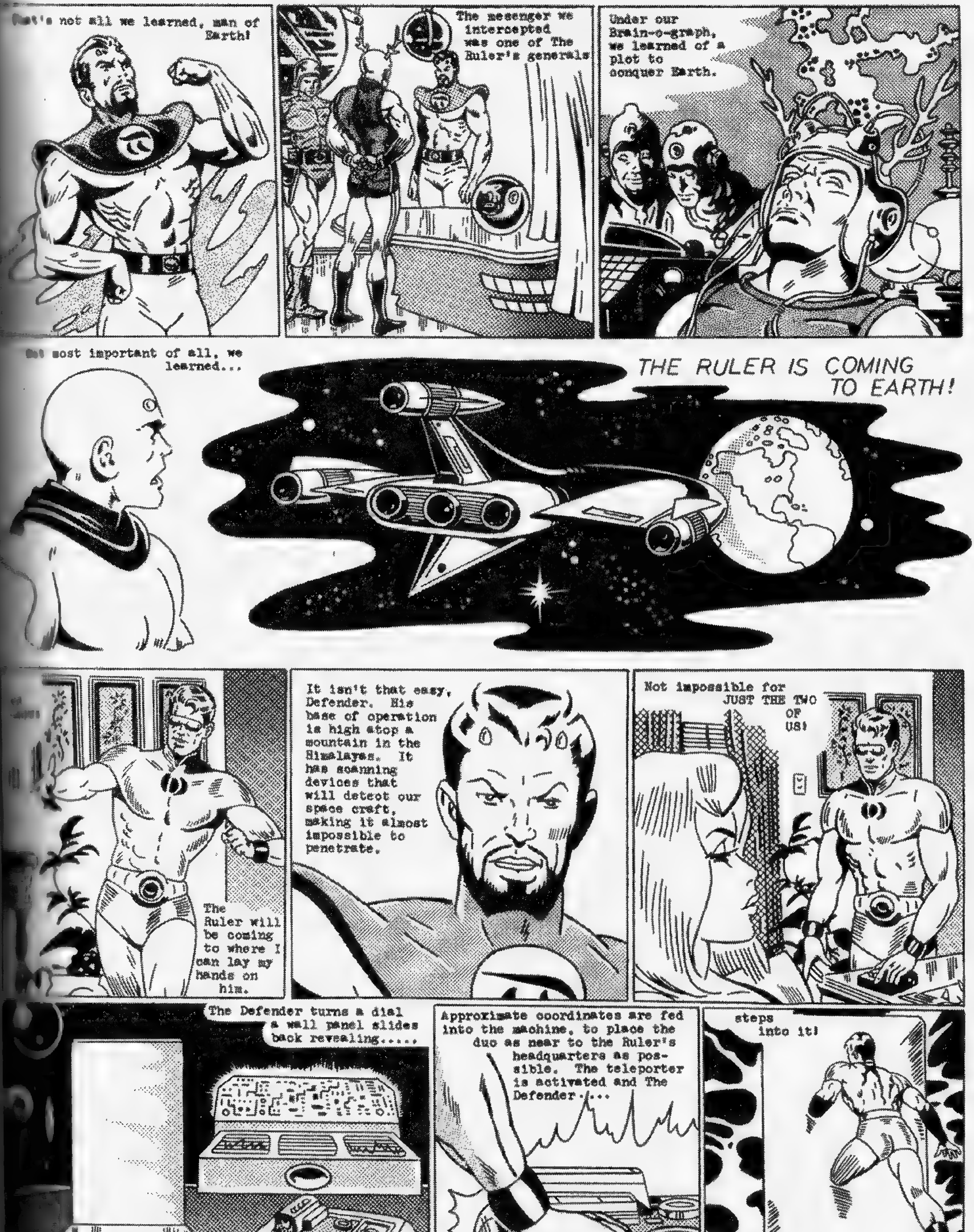
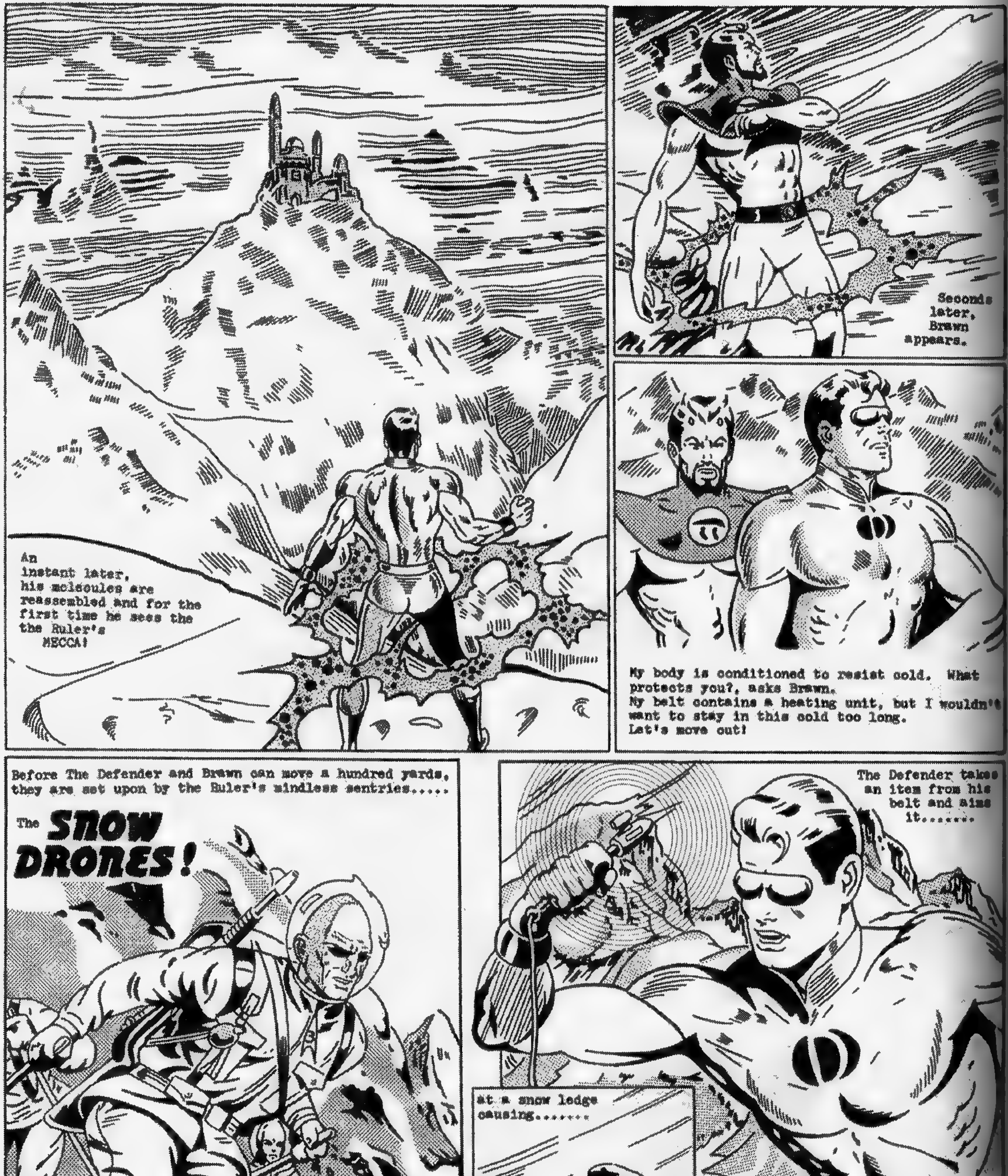
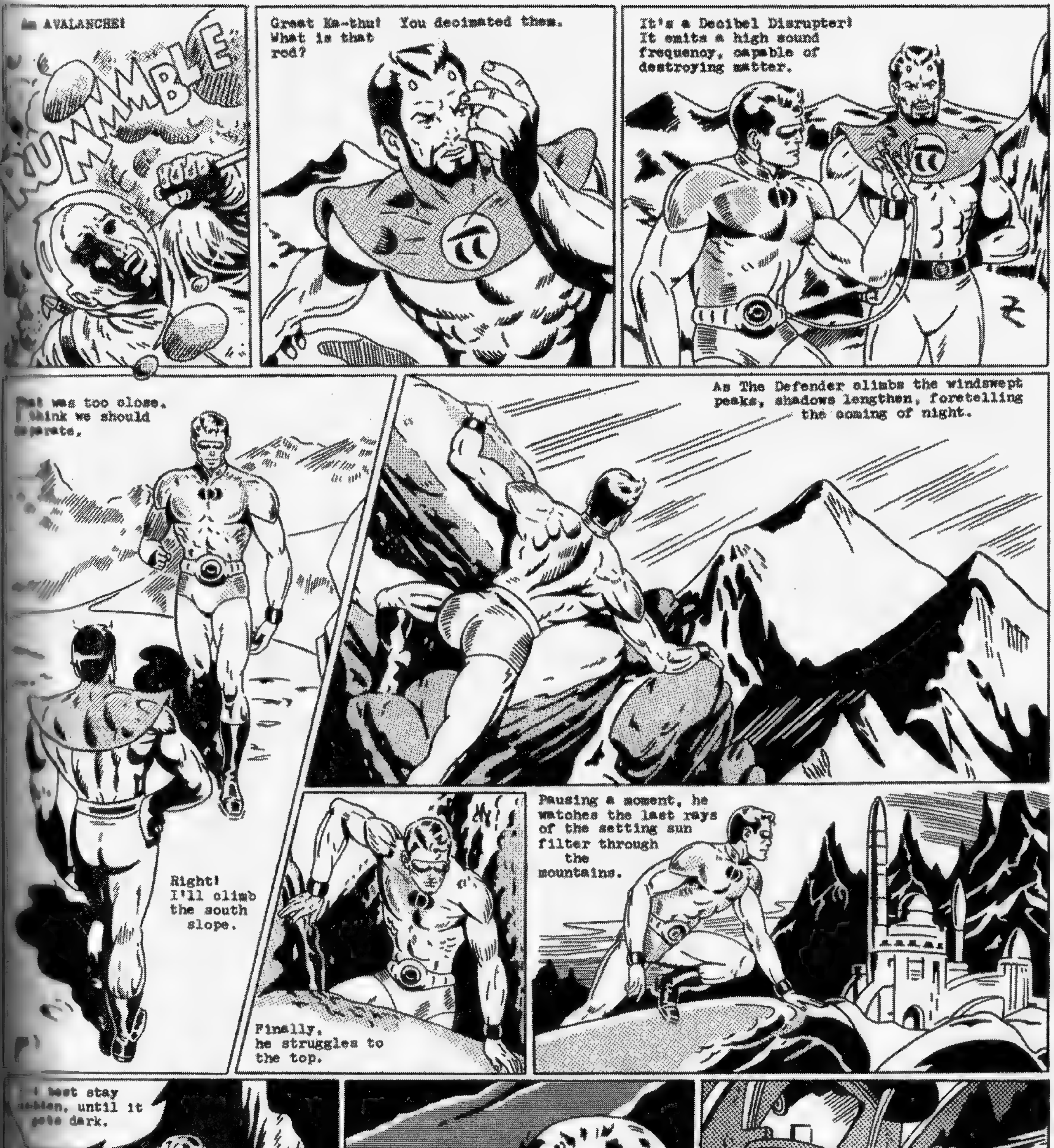
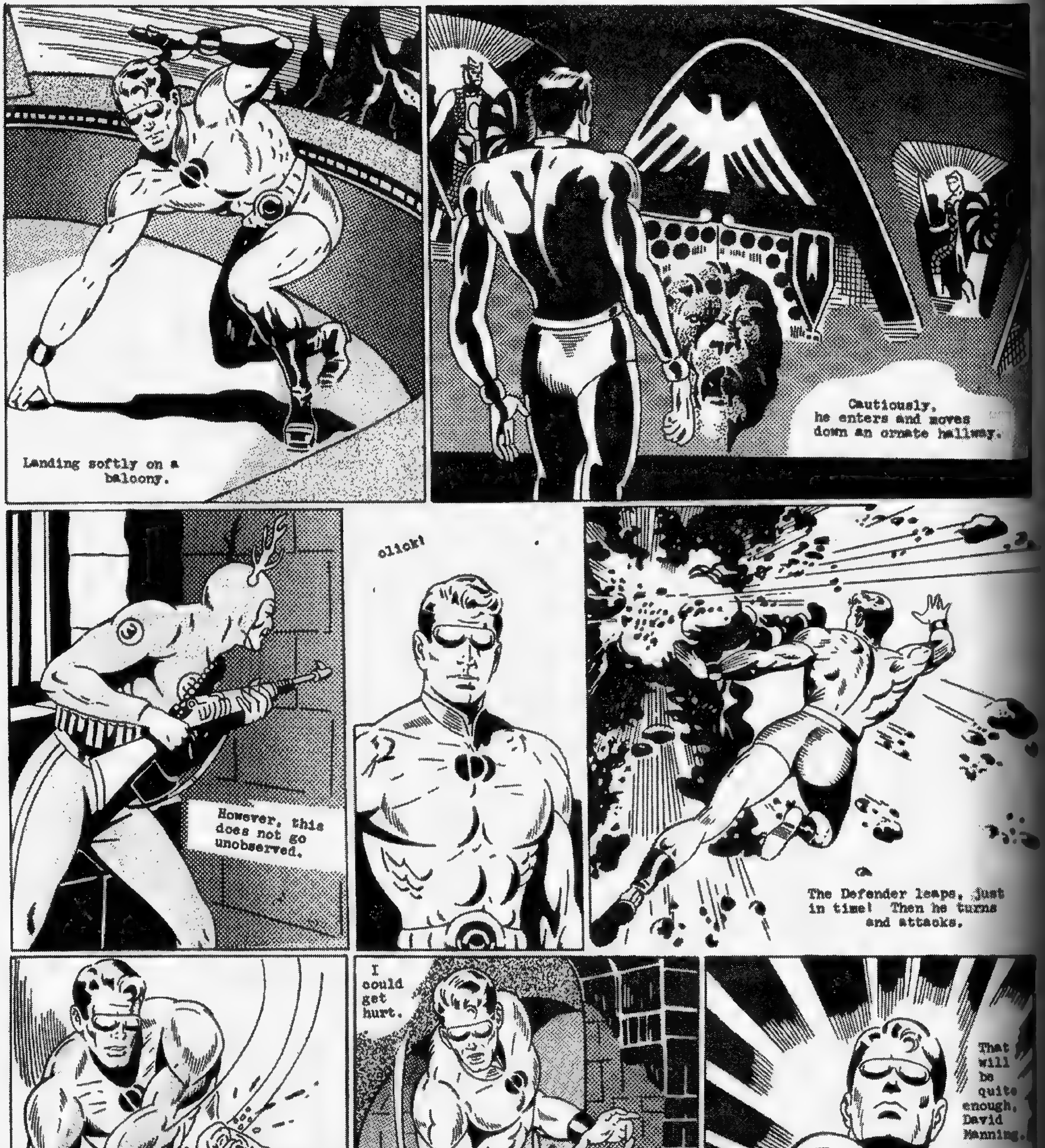


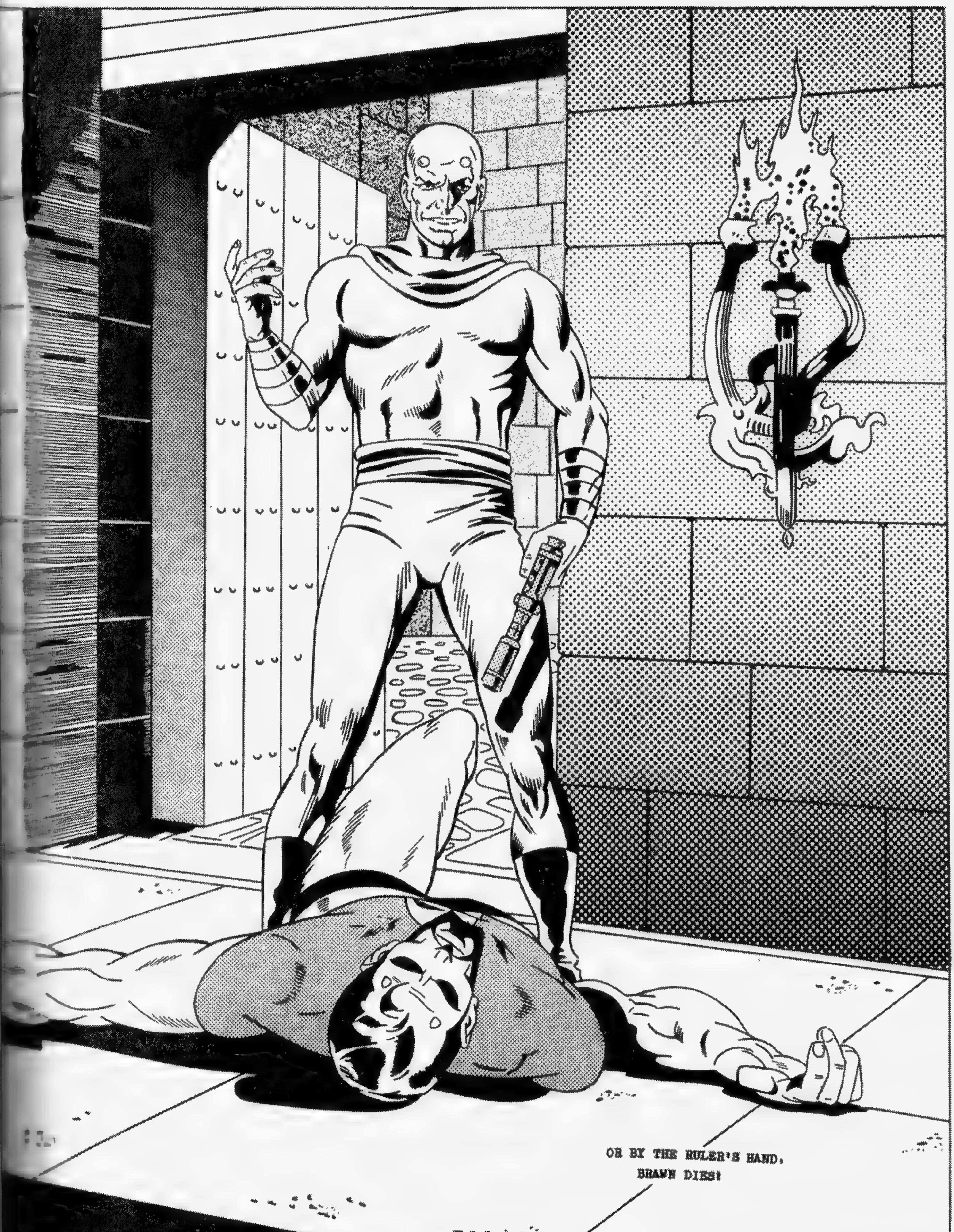

Martin Greim
Presents:
DAVID MANNING
The DEFENDER
LEGEND
While aiding a mysterious girl, who was wounded trying to deliver a message to him, The Defender is confronted by a being calling himself Brawn. Brawn threatens to destroy him and after a short encounter shoots The Defender with a ray-gun.
Slowly, The Defender regains consciousness.
Feeling better, David Manning?
Brawn didn't mean to harm you. He thought you had hurt me.
Next you'll be telling me he's like a big friendly puppy. Alright, I'll accept that. But who are you and what do you want?
I am Jolene, queen of Meluna - moon of Myphesto and Brawn is Captain of my space guard.
We came to Earth, due to a dispatch of the Ruler's that we intercepted.
It told of how a Revenge Squad was to trace you, by an element in your belt, and eliminate you.
We came to warn you, but arrived too late.
MLG '69


That's not all we learned, man of Earth!
The messenger we intercepted was one of The Ruler's generals
Under our Brain-o-graph, we learned of a plot to conquer Earth.
But most important of all, we learned...
THE RULER IS COMING TO EARTH!
The Ruler will be coming to where I can lay my hands on him.
It isn't that easy, Defender. His base of operation is high atop a mountain in the Himalayas. It has scanning devices that will detect our space craft, making it almost impossible to penetrate.
Not impossible for JUST THE TWO OF US!
The Defender turns a dial a wall panel slides back revealing.....
A [illegible]PORTATION DEVICE!
Approximate coordinates are fed into the machine, to place the duo as near to the Ruler's headquarters as possible. The teleporter is activated and The Defender....
steps into it!


An instant later, his molecules are reassembled and for the first time he sees the the Ruler's MECCA!
Seconds later, Brawn appears.
My body is conditioned to resist cold. What protects you?, asks Brawn.
My belt contains a heating unit, but I wouldn'
want to stay in this cold too long.
Let's move out!
Before The Defender and Brawn can move a hundred yards, they are set upon by the Ruler's mindless sentries.....
The SNOW DRONES!
The Defender takes an item from his belt and aims it.......
at a snow ledge causing.......

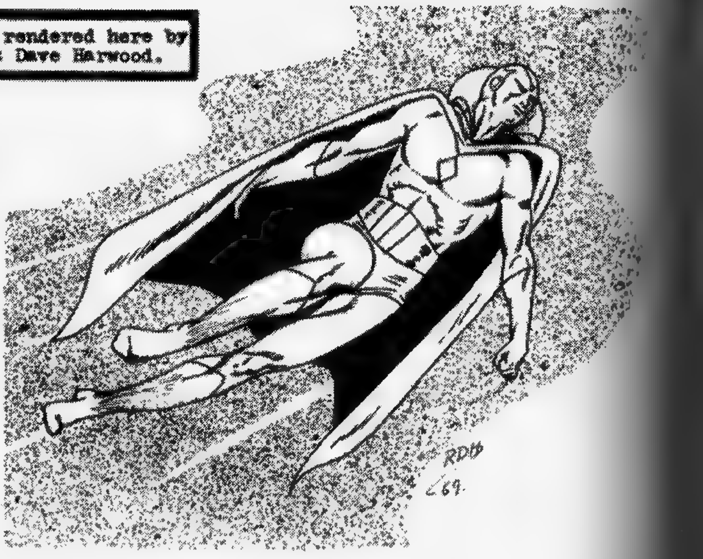

An AVALANCHE!
RUMMMBLE
Great Ka-thu! You decimated them. What is that rod?
It's a Decibel Disrupter! It emits a high sound frequency, capable of destroying matter.
That was too close. I think we should separate.
As The Defender climbs the windswept peaks, shadows lengthen, foretelling the coming of night.
Right! I'll climb the south slope.
Finally, he struggles to the top.
Pausing a moment, he watches the last rays of the setting sun filter through the mountains.
I'd best stay hidden, until it gets dark.
Wouldn't you know it, a full moon. I'll fly in low, to avoid detection.
Silently, he glides upward....


Landing softly on a balcony.
Cautiously, he enters and moves down an ornate hallway.
However, this does not go unobserved.
click!
The Defender leaps, just in time! Then he turns and attacks.
Musn't do that!
I could get hurt.
That will be quite enough, David Manning.


OR BY THE RULER'S HAND, BRAWN DIES!
TO BE CONTINUED!

COMIC CHATTER

THE VISION is rendered here by English artist Dave Harwood.



It's correct the foul-up time. I've got two big ones to correct this issue. First.....Fan, John Hopfner brought to my attention that last issues cover artist, Rich Buckler, repeated the word the twice in the Vision's statement... "Man may well reach the the stars, etc." John was right on the ball. I never noticed it.

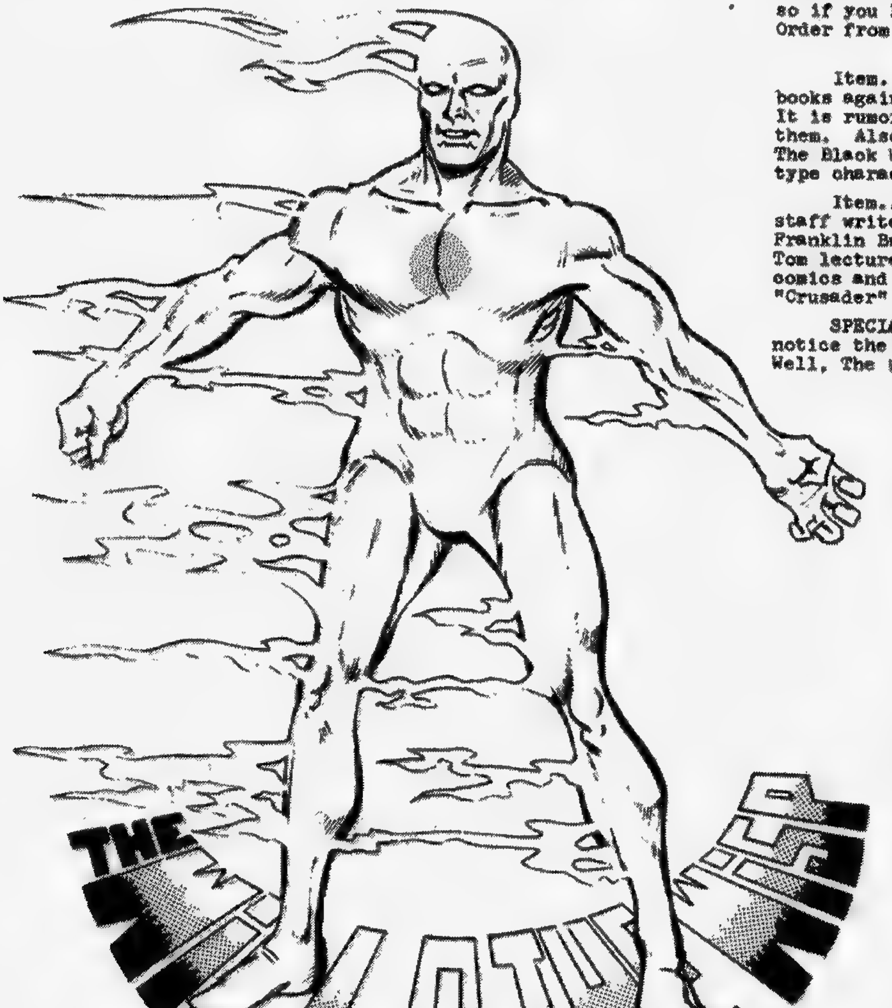
Secondly.....For the last 3 issues, I've been calling fan artist Keith Fukumitsu, Keith Fujimitsu. I'm truly sorry about that ~~K[illegible]~~, ~~K[illegible]~~, ~~K[illegible]~~ - oh, the heck with it!

Item...Staff artist, Anthony Kowalik has won first prize in Warren Publication's Vampirella contest. Tony named the fan page "Vampi's Flames" and that clever title won him first prize. Didn't I mention earlier, that Tony was a great idea man?

Item...Beginning very soon, The Sub-Mariner will return to the way he appeared in the 1940's. His head will appear flatter and his story line will return to the "golden age" style.

Item...Jim Steranko has been commissioned by Esquire Magazine to do a six-page, full color strip, for their June issue. Watch for it!

Item...Well, you fans have asked for it - now you're going to get it....A COMIC CRUSADER - CHAMPION SPECIAL. It will be about 40 pages, wrap-around, and will be out sometime this summer. Don't order yet. More details next issue.



Item...Many of you have asked where Steve Fritz's fanzine, XANADU is. This 60¢ fanzine of fantastic art won't be published until Steve receives enough orders for it. This zine is worth any fan's money, so if you haven't ordered it yet, now's the time. Order from...STEVE FRITZ, 1472 Button Gwinnett Pl.
Norcross, Ga. 30071.

Item...Marvel Comics are coming back with split books again. That is, two characters in one mag. It is rumored that Dr. Strange may return in one of them. Also, look for Hawkeye's old girl friend, The Black Widow, to reappear as a "New Wonder Woman" type character.

Item...Comic Crusader goes to school. Recently, staff writer Tom Fagan visited his old friend Prof. Franklin Buchanan, in Columbus, Ohio. While there, Tom lectured to a class on communications, about comics and used "Crusader" as a point of reference. "Crusader" does get around!

SPECIAL NOTE: I'm sure you can't help but notice the spectacular Len Wein art on this page. Well, The Will-'O'-The-Wisp is one of the tremendous strips lined up to alternate with The Defender. Just wait 'till you see this fantastic character in action.

Item..."In brightest day, in blackest night, no evil shall escape my sight".....Green Lantern finds out he's been kidding himself. G.L. teams up with Green Arrow and combats prejudice, slums and moral fabrications, after G.L. loses some of his power, because he sasses the Guardians. G.L., G.A. and one of the Guardians, in earth guise, then tour the country, in a jeep, to find the real America. Both Green Lantern and Green Arrow share equal cover billing and the art is by Neal Adams.

Item...Speaking of Neal Adams - Neal had designed a new costume for Robin, but National turned it down. The reason for this?...."To much of a departure from the original".

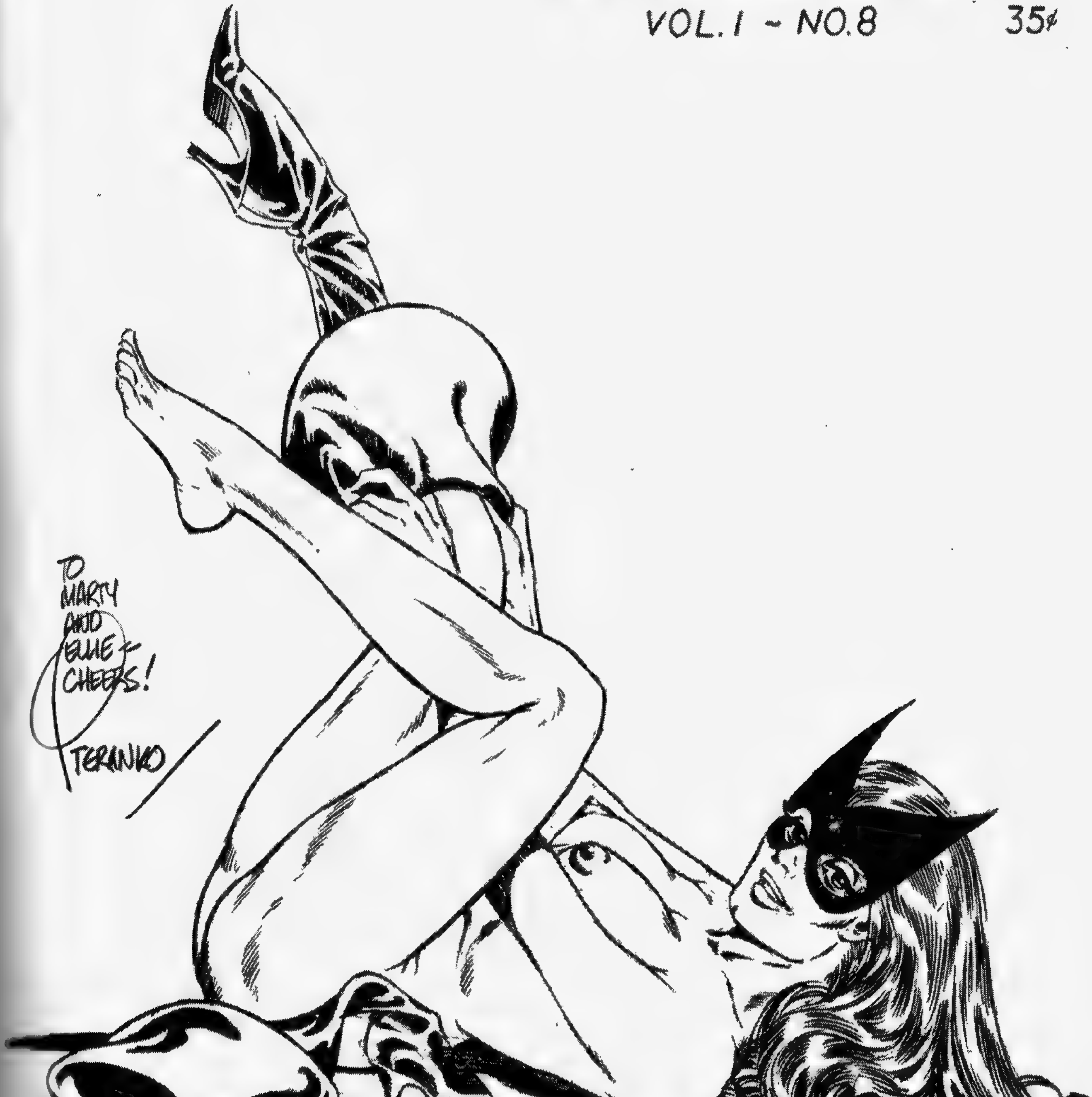
Item...Congratulations are in order for Don Newton. (This issues cover artist) Don has just married country and western singer Jodie Owen. Welcome to the club, Don.

Personal Note: The next issue of "Comic Crusader" will be out around May or June. However, if it should be delayed, please don't write me nasty notes asking where it is. I'm not rushing this publication. You'll receive it as soon as possible. I would order the next issue now though. They sell out fast and you won't want to miss the next one.

In closing, I'd like to wish all you fans the best for 1970. Stay well and I hope you enjoy the issue.

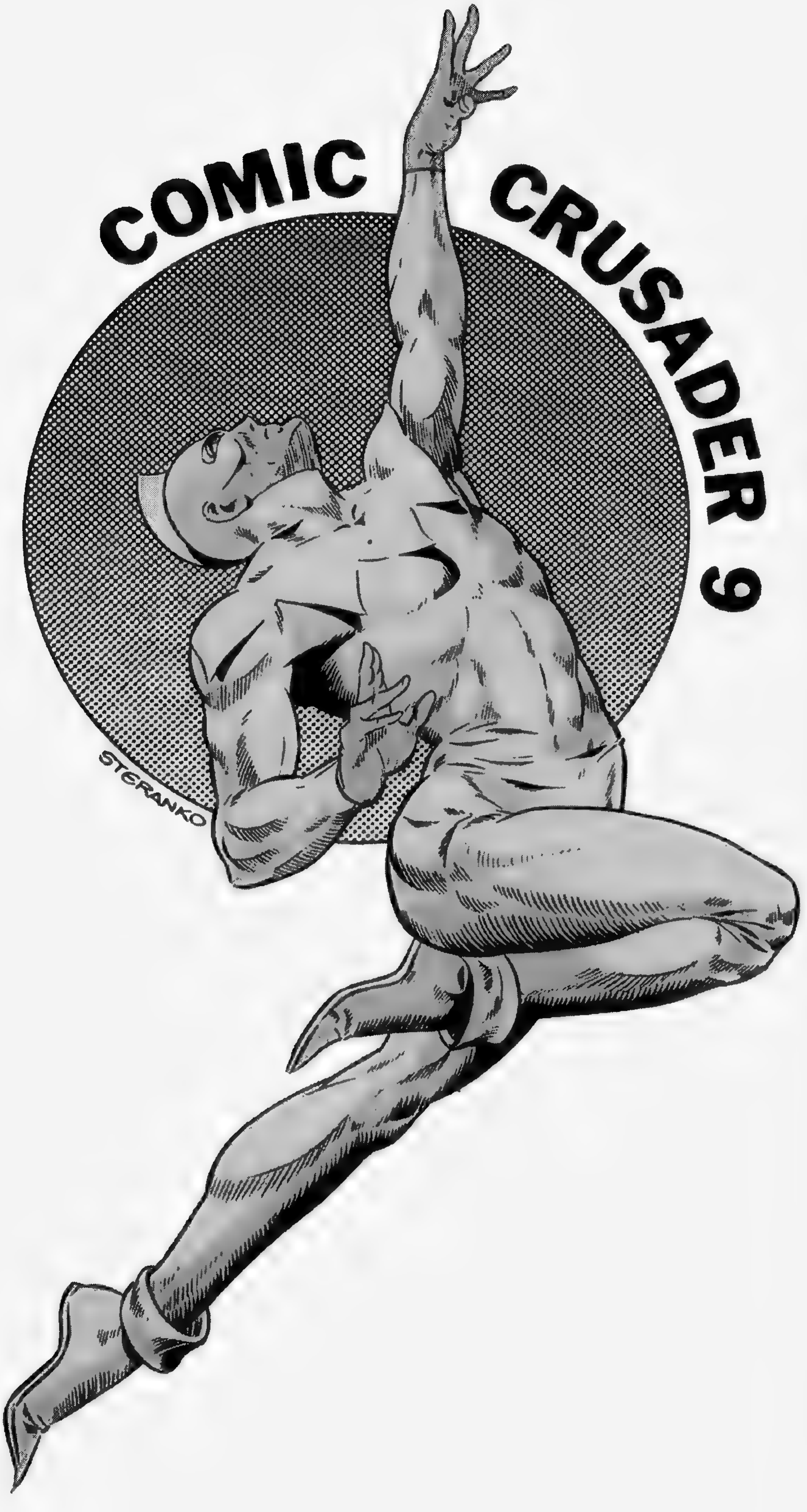
comic crusader

VOL. I - NO. 8 35¢



TO MARTY AND ELLIE — CHEERS!

STERANKO


COMIC CRUSADER 9
STERANKO

CRUSADER COMMENTS

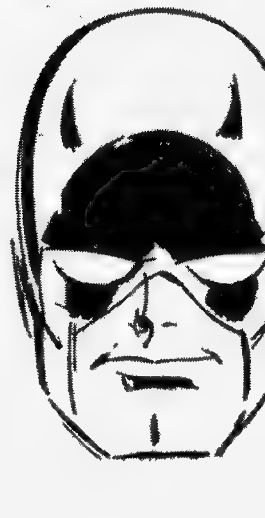
Gratitude can't be expressed enough to the pros and fans who have put this 9th issue together. I thank you, one and all!

This issue marks the last one at 35¢. Because of rising print costs and a threatened postal increase, I am forced to raise my price to 45¢. I do this with regret, but it can't be helped. However, I believe that this fanzine's contents will prove well worth what you pay for it. So beginning next issue, "Comic Crusader" will cost 45¢.

As you read through this issue, you will notice the absence of two features advertised last issue. Mongo Mania by Mike Royer and Will 'o' the Wisp by Len Wein. Both of these pros were swamped with work and were unable to make this issue's deadline. However, the Mongo Mania article should be in the next issue and Len's strip will be shown at a later date. I hope you'll enjoy the article and strip that replaced them.

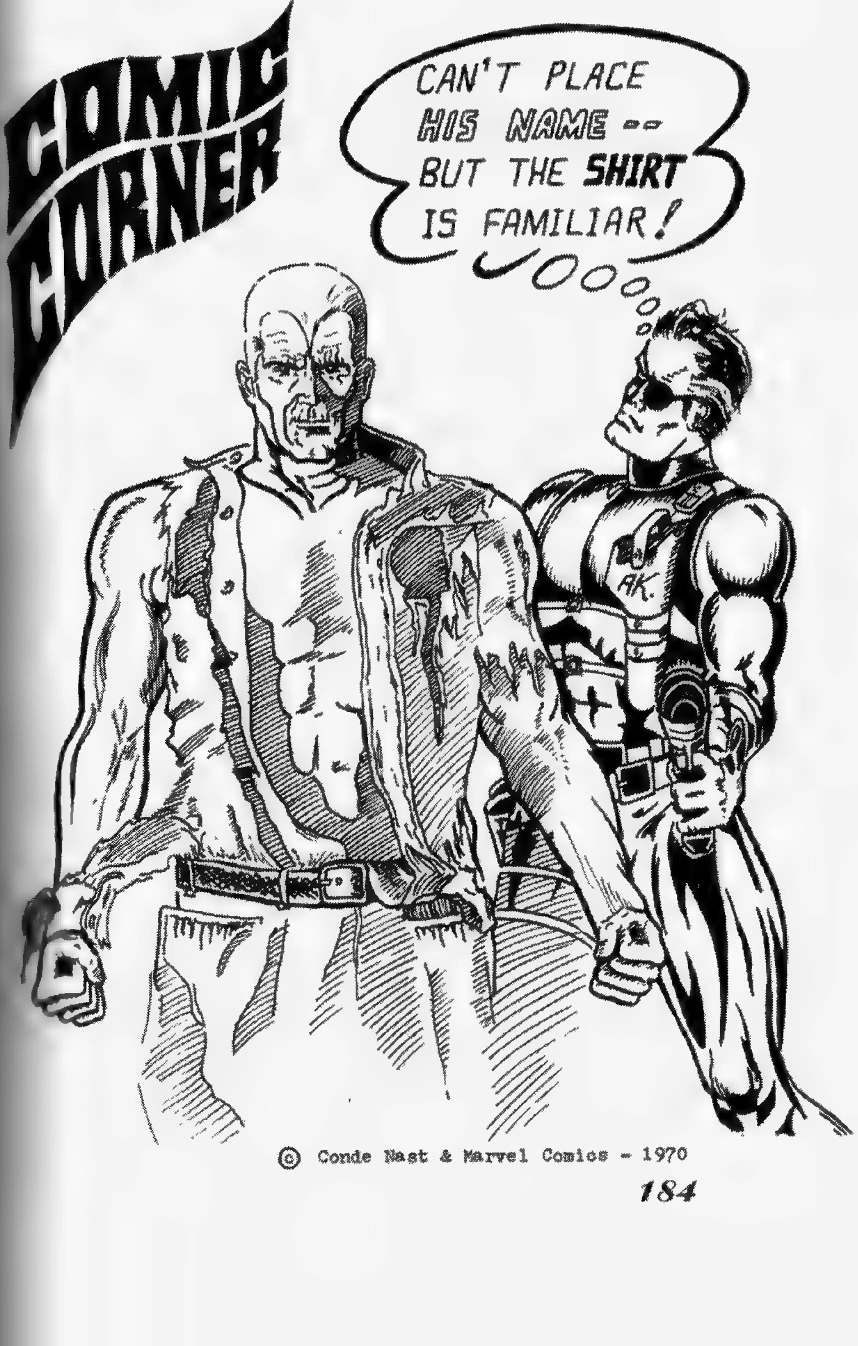
I'd like to take a moment to thank my friend Jim Steranko, for this issues beautiful color cover. I appreciate your taking time from your schedule to do it for me. I know how very busy you are.

There's an item, that's making the rounds through fandom these days, that I'd like to warn you about. It's called a "Chain Letter". This letter states........"You can make up to $8,000 for merely sending in $1.00, and mailing the chain letter to 20 of your friends." I've received 6 of these letters, from fans who subscribe to "Crusader", so I felt I should comment about them. CHAIN LETTERS are ILLEGAL and mathematically impossible. Unless your name is somewhere near the top of the master list, you could only make $8,000 if double the population of the United States participated. Then, if you did collect, you'ld probably be arrested for engaging in mail fraud. So don't be taken in by this nasty racket fans.



Gene Colan

© Marvel Comics - 1970


COMIC CORNER
CAN'T PLACE HIS NAME -- BUT THE SHIRT IS FAMILIAR!
AK.

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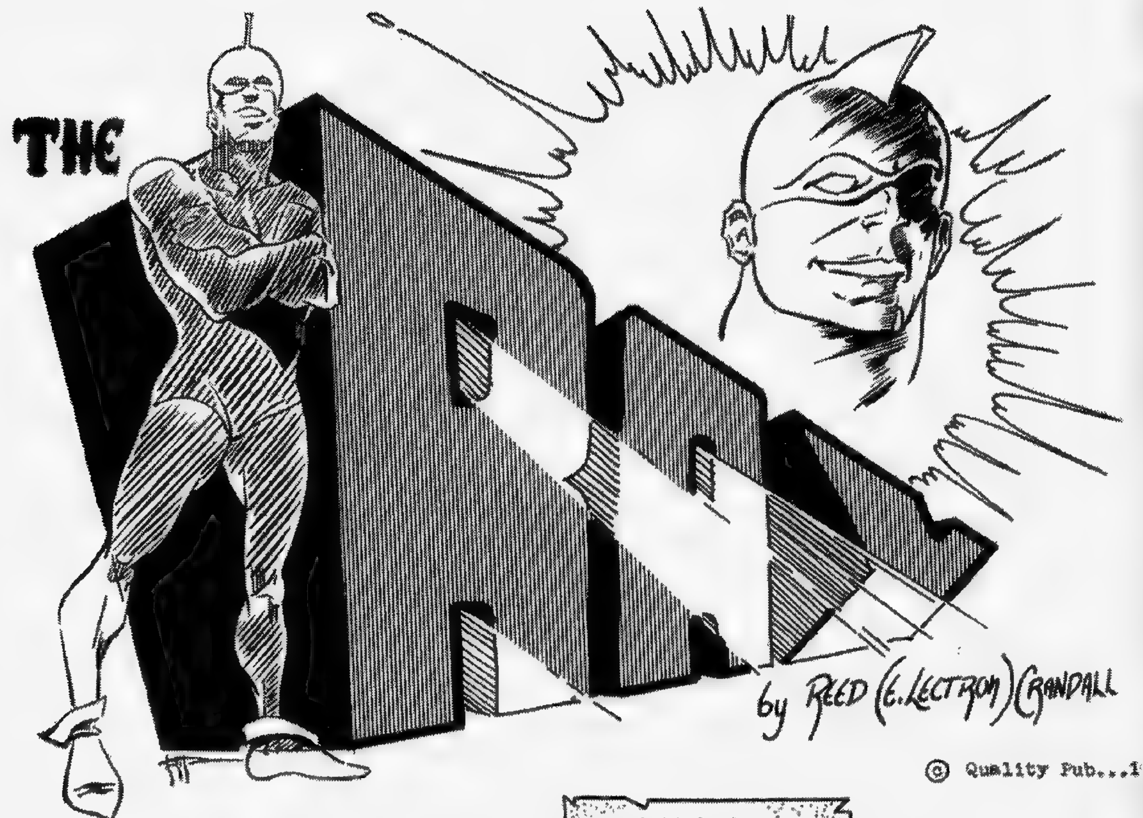

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Article by
MARTIN L. GREIM
Art by
FRITZ & GREIM

The Ray

A being of pure power. Within his body was harnessed the energy of cosmic light. When exposed to a light of any sort, he was able to release this great power and accomplish almost anything.

Who was The Ray? Where did he come from? To learn this, we must go back a few years; in fact, quite a few years, to the Golden Age of Comics. D.C. had introduced Superman and in Detective Comics #27, Batman came into being. It was 1939 and the Quality Comics line had just jumped on the super hero bandwagon. In fact, it was with a #27 issue that Quality introduced their first super hero......... DOLL MAN. Although the Quality company had been publishing comics since 1934, in the form of Feature Funnies, it was not until the introduction of Doll Man that they had any super heroes. In fact, with this issue, they changed the name of their magazine from Feature Funnies to Feature Comics.

It has always amazed me, how little recognition the Quality line has received from comic fans, over the years. Quality Comics had some of the best art and layout ever to appear in comics. It even surpasses some of the material put out by D.C. and Marvel today. This comic line also created three of the most memorable super heroes of their day...PLASTIC MAN, DOLL MAN and THE BLACKHAWKS. But then, I'm getting away from my story.

The second title, of the Quality line, appeared in July, 1939. It was called "SMASH COMICS". Shortly after its first publication, it began to add super heroes. The first hero to appear in it was "The Invisible Justice". (#1 - 31) This strip had to do with a crime fighter, Kent Thurston, who donned a chemically covered hood that made him invisible. In September of 1940, Smash Comics #14, The Ray was born.

It began simply enough; with the editor of The Morning Telegraph bemoaning the fact his star reporter was out somewhere and that he'd have to put his cub re- porter, Happy Terrill, on the hottest story assignment in months...Professor Styne's Balloon Ascent Into The Stratosphere. (Ed. note: As you read this, in this and age of rockets to the moon, you may not think a balloon flight much. However, remember back in 1940, when this story was written, balloon flights brought to the brink of space and much of what we've learned our upper atmosphere was learned in this dangerous

As the Telegraph's editor ranted and raved, Happy Terrill tried to get in a word. Finally, he managed tell his editor, that he'd signed up as a member of the balloon's crew. The editor, somewhat surprised by this turn of events, calmed down and wished Terrill luck with this dangerous assignment. Typical of the happy-go-lucky hero of the day, Terrill thanked him and quipped, "If I don't come back, tell the world that Happy Terrill died with a scoop!"

One hour later, at a secret hanger, Prof. Styne was giving last minute instructions to Terrill and his crew. Because they might not return to earth alive, the balloon's crew was made up of convicts. The balloon itself, carried a round, metal sphere in which the Professor, crew and scientific instruments would be encased. Around this sphere was a narrow catwalk, on which a man might walk to adjust outer instruments and the air cock. Finally, the huge balloon began its journey up through the myriad of stratosphere layers, to the edge of space itself.

All went well, until a cosmic storm approached. Terrill noticed that the outer air cock was open and volunteered to go out on the catwalk to close it. With clenched teeth, Terrill edged his way along to the air cock. Just as he closed it, the balloon was suddenly swept upward into a strange field. A wierd haze of cosmic light engulfed the balloon, as Terrill hung on for his life. The cosmic storm lashed the balloon in a fury of dazzling lights. Terrill grew rigid and an amazing thing happened. His figure seemed to shrink as another rose out of him. A shaft of light shot up from where he once stood as Terrill, and a new form rose into space. Unknown to the men inside the metal sphere, The Ray had been born!

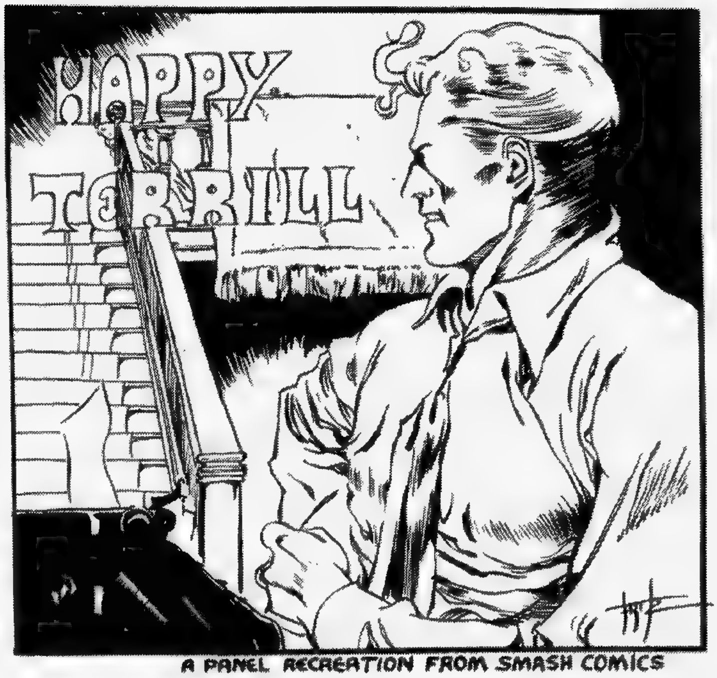
His costume, at this time, consisted of a skin tight yellow tunic, with a sunburst collar to which a hood mask, with a ridged top, was attached. His legs were bare and he wore short yellow boots. In following stories, his legs were covered in yellow. The Ray's costume underwent a few slight changes, from story to story, but the basic concept was the same...all yellow, like a Ray of light.

When Professor Styne's ship returned to earth, it was reported that Happy Terrill had fallen to his death. It was also reported that the professor had discovered a new gas with the power of 100 tons of T.N.T. in one cubic inch. The second part of the report interested a gun runner named Anton Rox. He wanted the formula for the gas, for with it he planned to make a fortune with his illegal munitions business. Knowing that Professor Styne was being guarded by the army, Rox and his men entered the professor's lab under cover of darkness. After shooting the professor, and leaving him for dead, Rox gathered up the plans and made his escape. No sooner had Rox left, when The Ray appeared. The Ray found the professor alive and helped him to his feet.

"Who are you?", questioned the professor. "You look like Terrill, but you've a strange look!"

The reply came, "I'm The Ray. Terrill is dead. Forget him!"

With that, The Ray faded into a ray of light; only to appear out of the headlight beams of Rox's car, now speeding into a private airport. Before the astonished eyes of the criminals, the tall form of The Ray took shape. Drawing their guns, they attempted to shoot The Ray, but their bullets had no effect. The Ray attacked. His fists proved more than equal to the task of beating the thugs. When one of the thugs tried to run, The Ray calmly drew him back with a magnetic force. While The Ray had been battling his men, Rox had managed to make it to his plane and was taking off. Once again, a magnetic ray shot from The Ray's fingertips and the plane slowly descended to earth. Panicing, Rox tried to buy The Ray off, but to no avail. A smashing fist ended the proposition.



A PANEL RECREATION FROM SMASH COMICS

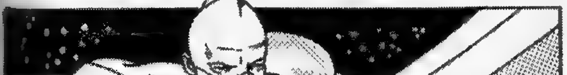
A few hours later, the police found Rox and his men, with a note of explanation, laying in a shaft of light in one of their cells. Meanwhile, The Ray returned the formula to the now well Professor Styne. The only thanks he wanted, was for the professor to forget he ever knew Happy Terrill. Then, in a burst of light, The Ray departed.

This origin story and all the other Ray stories to follow, were signed by E. Lectron. For some reason, the people at Quality did not want the artists name revealed. However, it was obvious, to any student of comic art at this time, that it was the work of Lew Fine. Lew works today, on the syndicated strip Peter Scratch. Because of this policy of signing the name E. Lectron to each story, it makes it difficult to tell who some of the artists working on the strip were. I believe these artists were: Fine ('40 - 42) Crandall ('41 - 42) Eisner, Berg, Allen, Palais, and Cuidera.

Issue #16 of Smash Comics, brought The Ray to grips with a Hindu mystic, named Bela Jat. Jailed for experimenting with the supernatural at the expense of human life, Bela Jat vowed revenge upon his release from jail. Through a wooden idol, he began to carry out his threat. Mailing this idol to his intended victims, Bela Jat appeared in a cloud of smoke and kidnapped two of the three men who had caused his imprisonment.

Just as Bela Jat was about to abduct the third man, Judge Hardwell, The Ray appeared and locked in a supernatural battle with him. The Ray wins, but before he can capture the mystic, Bela Jat vanishes before his eyes. Back at his hide away, Bela Jat prepares to execute his two prisoners by drowning them in their cell. As the chilly water rises, into the cell, on a beam of light, comes The Ray. In a moment, the two prisoners are freed and The Ray goes after Bela Jat. Bela Jat, who had been watching the whole scene on a crystal ball, steps back as the crystal glows with a weird light. From the curved surface of the crystal, springs The Ray, and once again he and Bela Jat are locked in combat. A powerful right knocks Bela Jat unconscious. However, the mystic's two servants, a giant and a dwarf, rush to his aid. A fantastic fight ensues, with the giant almost finishing The Ray. The battle ends, with the victorious Ray standing over the fallen giant. But from behind, the shadow of the mystic menacingly hovers over the victor. Just as Bela Jat is about to shoot The Ray, a swiftly hurled knife finds its mark and ends the life of Bela Jat. It was the police commissioner (one of the rescued men) who threw the knife, saving The Ray. Thanking the commissioner, The Ray steps back into a beam of light and vanishes.

The Ray, for the mostpart, fought ordinary criminals. This was true in Smash #19, when Slash Scraponi, a vicious gang leader, took over the prison on Bedlam Island and turned it into a fortress after he had been sentanced there.



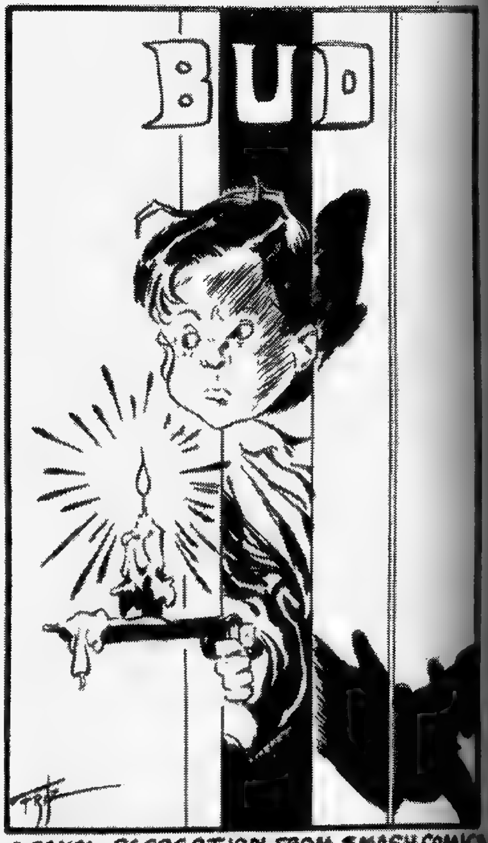
THE RAY IS BORN by

Apparently the statement "Reports of my death are greatly exagerated", proved true with Happy Terrill. For, with this story, he was back, alive and kicking, as The Ray's alter ego. Happy used a special flash light, that projected a powerful, thin beam of light, to turn him into The Ray and project him onto Bedlam Island. There, in the glaring light of the huge search beams of the island, The Ray attacked the criminals with a fury born of the bolt of lightning that transformed him in the stratosphere. During the battle, Scraponi made his escape by boat, but not before he destroyed the islands searchlights. For the moment, The Ray was trapped. Scraponi's escape seemed to be working, until a police plane dropped a flare, illuminating the entire surface of the river. The flare was all The Ray needed. Scraponi was doomed. He and the few who had escaped with him, were returned to prison on a curved beam of light, created by The Ray.

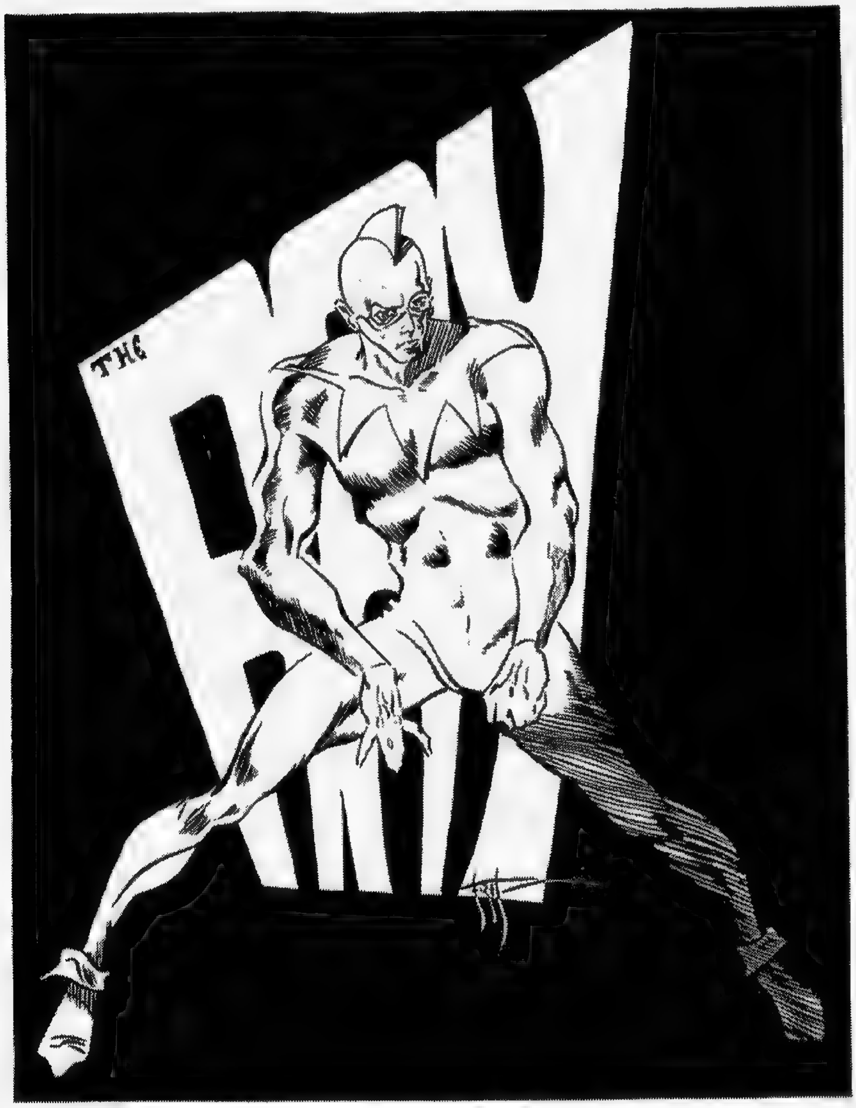
Wierd panels and eerie backgrounds were the by-word in Smash #20. The Ray fought Tim Marshwood's evil uncle, Jud and his butler Slyme, after they tried to do away with Tim and take over his estate. Fast action, mystery and tremendous art, were abundant here.

With issue #21, a major character was introduced into The Ray series. A trans-pacific clipper disaster threw together reporter Happy Terrill and a young boy named Bud. Later, this same issue, they battled the forces of a fantastic island emporer called Captain Blue. At first, Bud wasn't aware that The Ray and Happy Terrill were one, but in later stories it was revealed to him.

Issue #22, saw Bud abducted from Terrill's New York home, by a wierd character riding a six legged horse. This character then dropped Bud into a dream-like world. It was a world where peace and fun were all that mattered. That is, until Captain Blue entered the scene again. Captain Blue and a villain named Kulik, were attacking the dream world of Elixir, from a fleet of warships. All seemed lost, until The Ray, searching for Bud, came on the scene. He boarded the enemy flagship and began wiping out the Captain's forces. While this was going on, Bud, thinking he was missing all the fun, borrowed a skycar, only to have it race wildly out of control. The Ray put the finishing touches on Captain Blue by throwing him overboard and then brought Kulik to King Feveral in Elixir. Just then, high above, Bud's skycar raced ever faster toward the earth. There was a resounding CRASH and Bud found himself in Happy Terrill's arms. It was only a dream...or was it?



A PANEL RECREATION FROM SMASH COMICS



Only a dream...perhaps; but the artistic staff at Quality wasn't. They were real! Quality had some of the best, in their stable of artists...Jack Cole, Paul Gustavson, Lew Fine, Alex Kotzky, Will Eisner (who influenced much of Quality's art) and Reed Crandall.

Reed Crandall...His work on The Ray was something to behold. Shots of The Ray in flight seemed to come alive. Unlike many of today's super heroes in flight, Crandall's figures were poetry in motion. They were beautiful, believable figure studies of man in flight. In fact many of The Ray's flying shots have been swiped by super hero artists of today. When one thinks of The Ray, Reed Crandall's name is synonymous. Let's pause a moment, in this saga of The Ray and learn a bit about this top ranking artist.

REED CRANDALL was born Feb. 22, 1917 on a farm in Winslow, Indiana. When he was seven, his family moved to Bloomington and at thirteen to Newton, Kansas. In his last year in high school, Reed won a scholarship to the Cleveland School of Art in Cleveland, Ohio. At the end of four years, the school awarded him a traveling scholarship.

His first job, after art school, was with the Newspaper Enterprise Association doing Sunday supplement illustrations, retouching news photos and editorial cartoons. A year later, found Reed on his way to New York, where he obtained a job with the artists "stable" of Eisner and Iger. The first strip he worked on was a feature called "The Old Witch" for Quality's Hit Comics. Reed only did one of these strips, in issue #3. He then went on to such strips as Doll Man, Hercules, Stormy Foster, Captain Triumph, Paul Bunyan and of course The Ray. In Crack Western, a strip called "Arizona Raines", also found the talent of Reed Crandall. His work also found its way into a comic called Buccaneer.

A little known fact about Reed is, that when he took over the Doll Man strip, he fashioned a life size statue of Doll Man in plastic. This was to help him master the character. After perfecting the statue to his satisfaction, he presented it to "Busy" Arnold, editor of Quality, who thought very highly of it. Can you imagine if this model was still around. It would be worth more than its weight in gold!

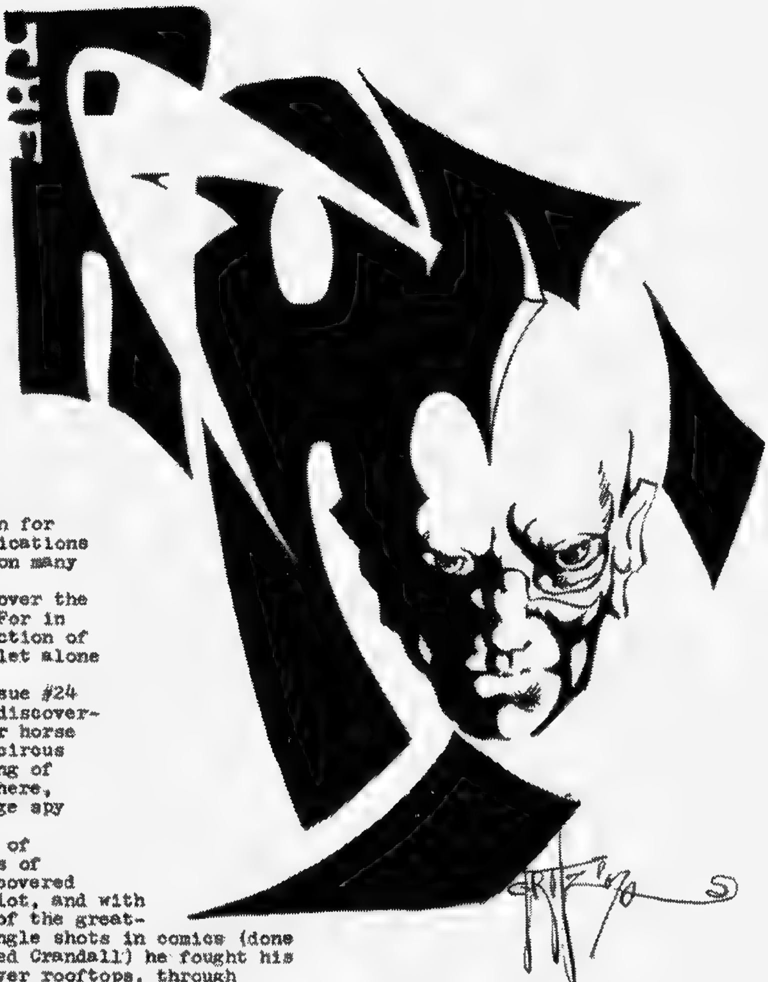
Many fans of Reed's early work believed the Doll Man strips were inked by Rudy Palais, but Reed denies this. While he was with Quality, Reed did a little outside work. He worked with Biro and Wood in Tops and did one "Kaanga" strip in Jungle Comics #42, for Fiction House. It is interesting to note, that Fiction House used the splash panel in that "Kaanga" story as a cover illustration in Jungle Comics #67, with only a few minor changes. This came as a surprise to Reed. Reed also inked one or two of Jack Kirby's pencils, for the early Captain America strip.

In 1943, after joining the Air Force, he continued doing comics in his spare time. In 1945, Reed was discharged from the Air Force. He immediately returned to Quality, where he was put to work on the Blackhawk strip. Reed mostly pencilled Blackhawk and was inked by Charles Quidera, although he did ink it for a short time himself. Reed also worked at the same time on a give away comic called "Gunga" for Buster Brown Shoes.

After Blackhawk was sold to D.C., Reed went to D.C. and remained there until 1956. Since then, Reed Crandall's work has included work for Atlas, Classics Illustrated, Dell, Treasure Chest, Tower, Flash Gordon for King Comics, and horror stories for Jim Warren's publications Creepy, Eerie and Vampirella. He has also done work on many of the Edgar Rice Burroughs books.

Though Reed Crandall has worked on many strips, over the years, my personal favorite will always be The Ray. For in this strip, he combined beautiful art with the fast action of a great super hero. Very few have matched his work, let alone surpass it!

I believe Reed's work on The Ray began around issue #24 of Smash Comics. Issue #24 told how The Ray and Bud discovered that a female equestrienne named Vera was using her horse to tap out morse code messages to foreign spies in a circus audience. The Ray forced Vera to take him to a meeting of her espionage ring, aboard an old river steamboat. There, The Ray battled overwhelming odds and broke up the huge spy organization.



Issue #26 found The Ray battling against a group of saboteurs. The saboteurs planned to release cylinders of hydro-cyanide gas around Naval dockyards. The Ray uncovered the plot, and with some of the greatest angle shots in comics (done by Reed Crandall) he fought his way over rooftops, through factories and finally ended up with a battle at sea.

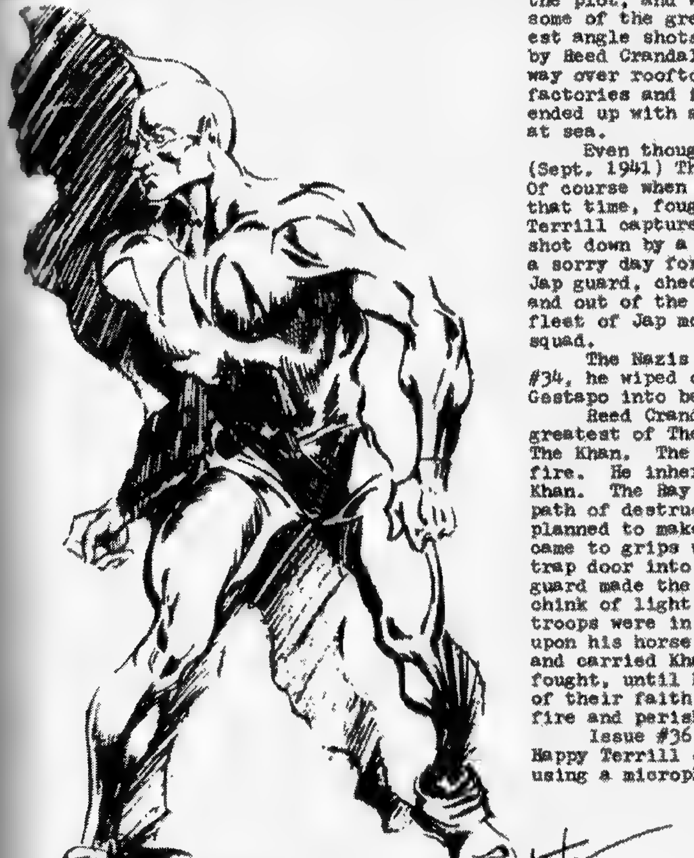
Even though America wasn't officially in the war at this time, (Sept. 1941) The Ray stories dealt with spy threats from foreign powers. Of course when W.W.II broke out, The Ray, like every other super hero at that time, fought the Axis. Issue #33 (without Crandall) saw Happy Terrill captured by the Japs, after the plane he was reporting from was shot down by a squadron of Japanese fighter planes. This proved to be a sorry day for the Japs. During a midnight raid, by our bombers, a Jap guard, checking on his prisoners, shone a flashlight beam on Happy and out of the beam rose The Ray. The Ray then proceeded to wipe out a fleet of Jap mosquito boats and later save some prisoners from a firing squad.

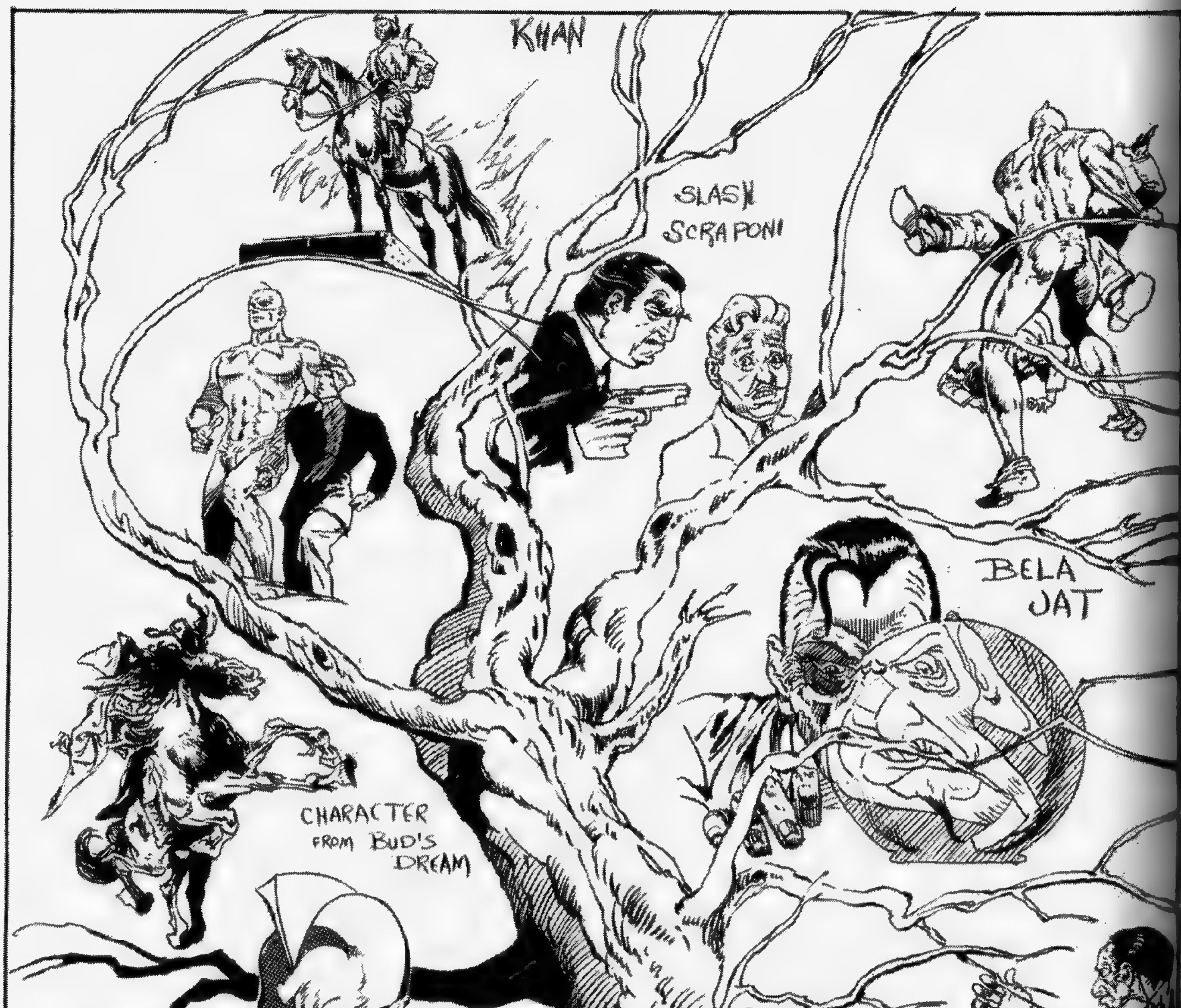
The Nazis were not immune from the wrath of The Ray either. In issue #34, he wiped out a number of Nazi troops in Budapest, after tricking the Gestapo into believing Happy Terrill was a traitor.

Reed Crandall returned in Smash #35 to illustrate perhaps the greatest of The Ray stories. In this tremendous issue, The Ray battled The Khan. The Khan was an Asian of tremendous strength and endurance of fire. He inherited his power from Jurah Hia and Genghis and Kublai Khan. The Ray fought him when The Khan and his hordes were blazing a path of destruction toward Moscow. With his troops immune to fire, he planned to make even his allies, the Nazis, slaves. When The Ray first came to grips with Khan, he was tricked into being dropped through a trap door into a room of darkness. There he stayed, powerless, until a guard made the mistake of checking on him, while holding a candle. A chink of light shone into his prison and The Ray burst free. Khan's troops were in Moscow. The streets were rivers of flame. Khan, seated upon his horse, was atop the Kremlin Wall. Suddenly, The Ray appeared and carried Khan to the top of St. Basil's Cathedral. There he and Khan fought, until Khan was finally knocked to the ground far below. Robbed of their faith in their master, Khan's troops lost their resistance to fire and perished in their own flames. A magnificent Ray saga.

Issue #36 saw The Ray battle Hammer Hand, a spy who had framed Happy Terrill of bank robbery and murder. The Ray was aided by Bud using a microphone to transmit his voice to a speaker in Hammer Hand's hammer shaped hand. Hammer Hand thought it was his dead son calling him from the grave and he confessed.

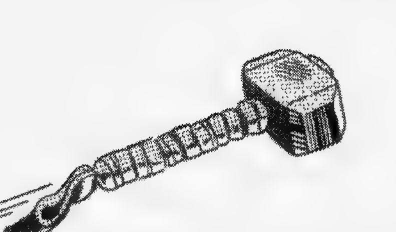
The last of The Ray stories came with issue #40 of Smash Comics. (Feb. 1943) The Ray had fought his way through spies, mystics and Axis forces; but Quality was the first company to feel the end of the Golden Age, so this wonderful hero fell by the wayside. Gone was The Ray! A hero blessed with some of the most fantastic art of his era. No more to glide on golden beams of light, to fight dark evil in the night! —




KHAN
SLASH SCRAPONI
BELA JAT
CHARACTER FROM BUD'S DREAM
ROX and FLUNKY

All characters © Marvel Comics 1970

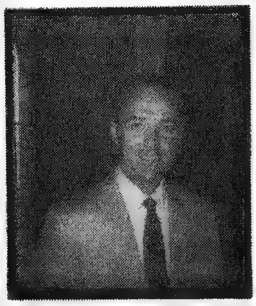
JOE SINNOTT



by...Cosgrove & Greim

Art...Black, Fujitake, Greim and
JOE SINNOTT.

Featuring: A special interview with
Mr. Sinnott by CRAIG BATTMER.



Gil Kane is fond of fefering to the comic book industry as a "factory business." By this, of course, he means the pressure of preparing new books each month, the need for speed, etc. And, regardless of how much you agree with Gil, it is obvious that the very nature of the comic industry results in a good deal of collaboration. In otherwords, few comics are one-man operations. It is a rare thing indeed when an artist will write, pencil, ink, and color his own story. At best, most artists will pencil and ink, but most of the time, the really good artists get pressed into devoting all of their time to pencilling--which explains the state of inking in comic books today. It's a rare thing to find a truly great inking artist---JOE SINNOTT is such a man.

Joe broke into the comic book industry in 1950, assisting Tom Gill on such books as "Red Warrior" and "Kent Blake", both published by the Marvel Comics Group. The Red Warrior was an Indian character while Kent Blake was a secret agent. In "the actual, uncensored story behind the origin of...Kent Blake," the story revealled how Kent had escaped with an American captain, "Ralph Strong," from a Nazi prison camp. Strong was shot at the last minute, but Blake managed to get the microfilm, he was carrying, to the government. He was made a secret service agent, and rapidly advanced until he held "the only position of its kind"...Special Secret Service Agent. In this role, he was accountable only to the president. Like Red Warrior, Kent Blake had his own magazine, entitled "Kent Blake of the Secret Service." They both performed the usual heroics expected of such heroes of that era, claims Mr. Sinnott.

As Stan Lee knew that Joe was working on the Blake books for Tom Gill, it was natural that Sinnott made Marvel his first stop when he went job hunting. Samples under arm, Joe entered Lee's office, and came out with a two page filler assignment. "I'll never forget that date," Joe reminisced, "as it was St. Patrick's Day (March 17, 1951) and I got stuck in the parade."

Crazes and trends moved rapidly in the fifties, and Joe quickly distinguished himself in two different genres. The first was the Western. He drew "Arrowhead," an adventure strip about a noble Pawnee Indian warrior. Often, Arrowhead was involved in protecting the whitemen from other, more warlike tribes, such as the Chyenne. Obviously a labor of love, the strip displayed Joe's consumate skill with the brush, as well as a good deal of care about the composition and backgrounds. Joe was in good company too. While he was drawing Arrowhead, for the Wild Western book, Joe Maneely and Syd Shores were filling out the book with stories of the Two-Gun Kid and Black Rider, Mystery Man of the Western Range.

Joe's brushwork was equally good on the horror stories he illustrated, although he also displayed a fine talent for pen work and fine detail. This, you will remember, was the hey-day of E.C., and imitators flourished. E.C., however, tended to pour their best illustrators into their non-horror mags, and as a result, the talented Marvel staff, operating under Lee, with good coloring and artists like Bill Everett and Joe himself, often beat E.C. at their own game. Joe was a master of horror. He drew creepy, intricate backgrounds, villainous villains, drooling vampires, frothing werewolves, and the whole horror bag, with the very best of them.

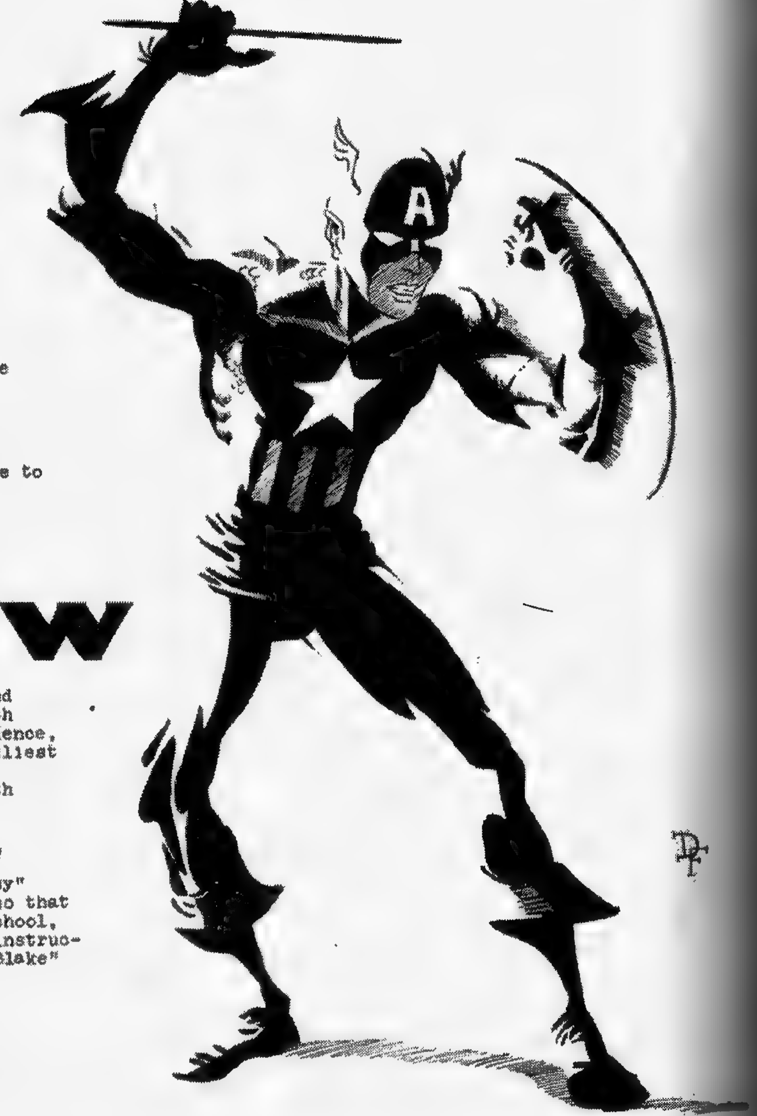
There is an interesting, little known sidelight to Joe's horror comics work. Remember when the Comics Code first made its debut? Wide World Photo Service carried a dramatic photo of Judge Charles F. Murphy, first code administrator, pointing to a dramatic "before and after" blow up; showing how the code will keep the comics clean. The enlarged panel was taken from a story entitled "Sarah" which appeared in Uncanny Tales #29, March, 1955 issue. The story is drawn by Joe Sinnott.

Marvel continued their "semi-horror-sf" line right up thru 1963, and Joe continued to do stories for these books. Gradually, he cut back the pen work and used the brush more and more often. A recent example of Joe's fantasy work is "I Became a Human Robot," reprinted in Fantasy Masterpieces #1.

Joe's fantastic skill as an inker first came to widespread attention when he inked the now-famous "Fantastic Four #5," the issue that introduced Doctor Doom. While this is not the best Fantastic Four Kirby ever drew, it is the best inked. For the first time, the beauty of Jack's pencils was brought out and complemented. The Torch really LOOKED like he was on fire. After doing this one issue, Joe left the FF, but later returned and inked an unbroken run of 50 issues. He still inks the FF today. All of his inking work on the FF has been great, even though he has never quite equalled the peak he reached with FF #5. (Probably because of the more extensive penwork he used the first go-round.) He remains, however, the best inker the Fantastic Four has ever had.

Leaving the FF after #5, Joe switched over to pencilling and inking the Thor strip. In the beginning, Jack Kirby created Thor, and in the beginning, he recreated him. In otherwords, originally Thor was a rather standard, trite strip, but shortly after beginning the Tales of Asgard sequence, Jack transformed it into the creative sword and sorcery fare that it is today. Unfortunately, Joe was one of the artists stuck with the earlier version. Thor doesn't represent Joe's finest work, but it is creditably drawn. Perhaps the main complaint was the super-long handle he insisted on putting on Thor's hammer. There are, however, some very interesting highlights to Joe's work on the strip. In Journey Into Mystery (Thor) #96, President Kennedy makes a guest appearance. During Joe's reign, the reader meets more and more of the Norse Gods, and Loki becomes the #1 villain. In issue #91, Thor's Belt of Strength and the Valkyries, two items straight from Norse mythology, are used for the first and last time.

After some free-lancing, including work on many historical and factual comics, Joe returned to Marvel, where he remains today, inking many of comicdom's top strips. Ask most Marvel pencil pushers who they'd like to ink their work, and the reply usually comes back---"JOE SINNOTT". And who can blame them?



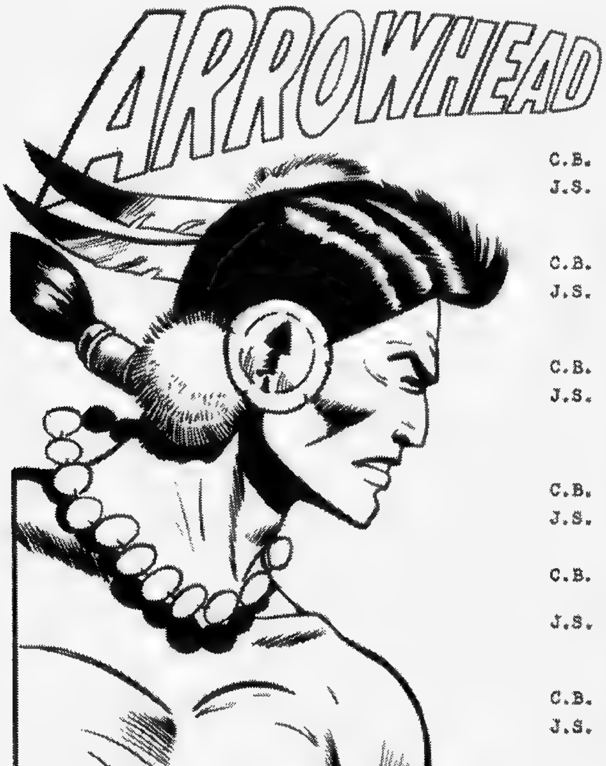
INTERVIEW

It was indeed a fortunate day, when fellow fan and staff member Craig Battmer brought me into contact with Joe Sinnott, via an interview. In my later correspondence, with Joe, I found him to be one of the warmest, friendliest guys I've ever had the pleasure of writing to.

Now Comic Crusader presents....."An Interview With JOE SINNOTT by Craig Battmer

C.B. What was your first job in the comic book field?

J.S. I did a 5 page filler called "Trudi" for a "Mopsy" comic put out by St. John Pub. Co. in 1950. Also that same year, while at the Cartoonist and Illus. School, I did pencils and inks for Tom Gill (one of my instructors) on such books as "Red Warrior" and "Kent Blake" (both Marvel) also a few for Dell.



C.B. Did Stan Lee like your work right away?

J.S. He must have felt it was adequate, as he always had a new script for me as I brought in each finished job. I did break in at an opportune time, as there seemed to be more scripts than artists. Stan did put out a great number of titles in the early 50's.

C.B. How did you get interested in comics?

J.S. I was always very interested in cartooning (especially sports), and after working 3 years in a cement plant and limestone quarry, I felt there must be something easier to do. After I ink some of Kirby's stories I often wonder.

C.B. Can you give us some background on your early Marvel work?

J.S. I think I enjoyed doing "Arrowhead" more than any other strip for Marvel. It was just a fun thing to do. He had his own book for a short time. I did about 15 or 20 of the stories. I had nothing to do with the script. It might have been done by Hank Chapman, but I'm not sure.

C.B. Did you enjoy pencilling, or do you prefer to be inking?

J.S. I prefer to do the complete job, however I don't like to pencil super-hero stories. In fact, if I had my choice, I'd like to be doing sports cartoons.

C.B. Would you like to pencil a feature for Marvel, and if so, what feature would you like to do?

J.S. Stan Lee asked me to do some penciling, but I feel super-heroes aren't my cup-o' tea, so I'm content to do the inks. I didn't care for the early Thor that I did. I do like to pencil the straight stuff however.

C.B. In general, what characters have you worked on over the years?

J.S. There was Red Warrior - Kent Blake - Arrowhead - Rick Davis (Special Agent) - Devil-Dog Dugan - Kid from Texas - Capt. America - Thor - Silver Surfer - F.F. etc, for Marvel. I've also done the life story of such notables as J.F.K. - Eisenhower - MacArthur - Pope John - Babe Ruth - Gene Tunney - Wright Bros. and many others for Treasure Chest. For Dell I did a 64 page book on the Beatles (with a great assist by Dick Giordano) and some 12 O'Clock High books. I enjoy this straight stuff very much.

C.B. Does an inker have any say-so on who he would like to ink?

J.S. In most cases yes, but I'm sure most inkers go along with the decision of the editors like Stan, who have a feeling as to what combination lends itself to a particular book.

C.B. What type brush and/or pen do you use?

J.S. I use a #2 (sometimes a #3) Winsor Newton and alternate between Higgins and Pelikan india ink. I use only a #659 Gillott crow quill pen.

C.B. Is an artists' paper supplied by the company?

J.S. It never use to be, but it is now.

C.B. On the average, how many pages do you ink per day?

J.S. I would like to do 3 a day, but it averages out to about 2½. It all depends on the story--but usually it's the backgrounds that slow me.

C.B. Do you follow strictly, the lines of the penciler or do you sometimes interject something you feel would be better than what the artist had previously put down, or eliminate to make the drawing appear better?

J.S. Sometimes I add a little, but with men like Kirby, Colan, and Buscema this is hardly necessary, as their pencils are so complete.

C.B. Can an inker request original art back from Marvel?

J.S. I requested some about 15 years ago, but was unsuccessful. I haven't asked since. We can obtain stats, however. Now that you mention it, in my 19 years in the business, I can count the number of original art, of my own, that I possess on one hand--I must try to obtain some.

C.B. Do you have any preferences on who's pencils you like most to ink?

J.S. Yes, I prefer to do Buscema's pencils, although I've only done 3 of his books. (Silver Surfer #1-2-3) I didn't care for the jobs I did on #1 and 2, but felt I was getting the feel of it with #3. He's one pencil artist you can't improve. An inker should improve upon the pencils if possible, and at least keep it the same. I feel John's work is so complete that any deviation from his pencils can only detract from his art.

C.B. Would you like to try inking other artists' pencils which you have not yet inked?

J.S. Two of my favorites, John Severin and Reed Crandall. I would also like to do a story by John Romita--I feel we would blend pretty well. I have never seen their pencils, however.

C.B. Do you have any favorite artists?

J.S. The list is long, but a few of them are: John Severin, Kirby, Colan, Crandall, Kubert, Jack Davis, Wood, Williamson, Steranko, Buscema--I could go on and on. Outside the comic book field, my all time favorite is Alex Raymond.

C.B. Do you feel any artist has influenced your style?

J.S. When I was a kid, I copied the early Caniff, Raymond and Zack Mosley. As I got older, and before the Cartoonist and Illus. School period, I copied Raymond exclusively--I'm sure he's the artist who's had the greatest influence on most of us.

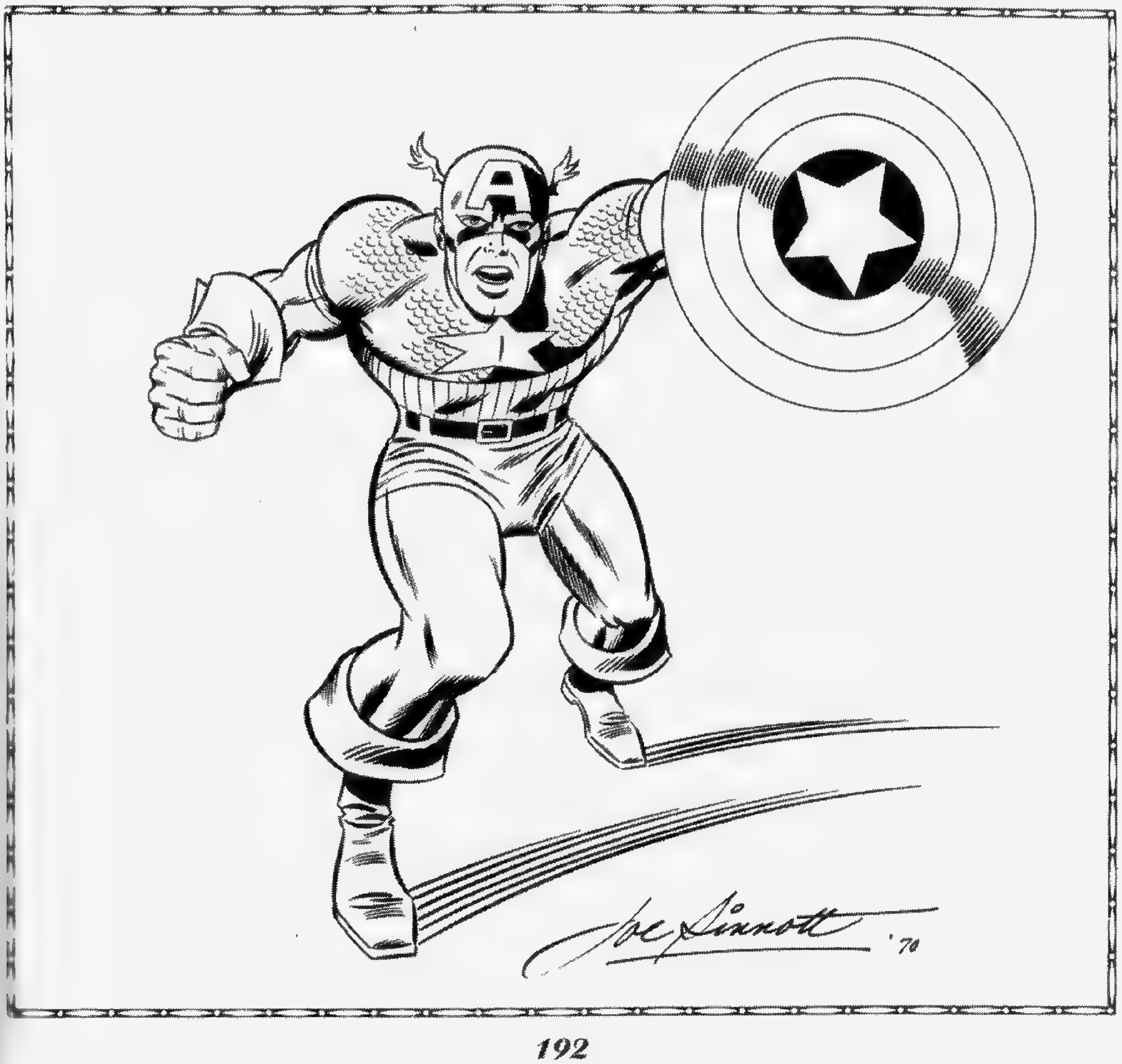
C.B. Do you consider comic book art a true art form?

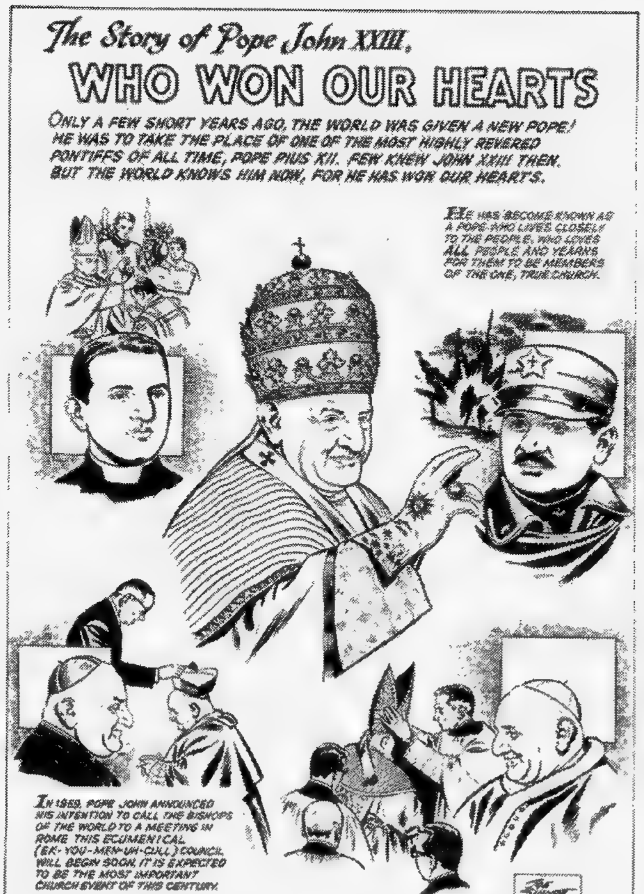
J.S. Yes--I'm sure most readers aren't aware of the many emotions expressed by an artist in presenting a supposedly simple story. They may be subtly presented, but they are there.

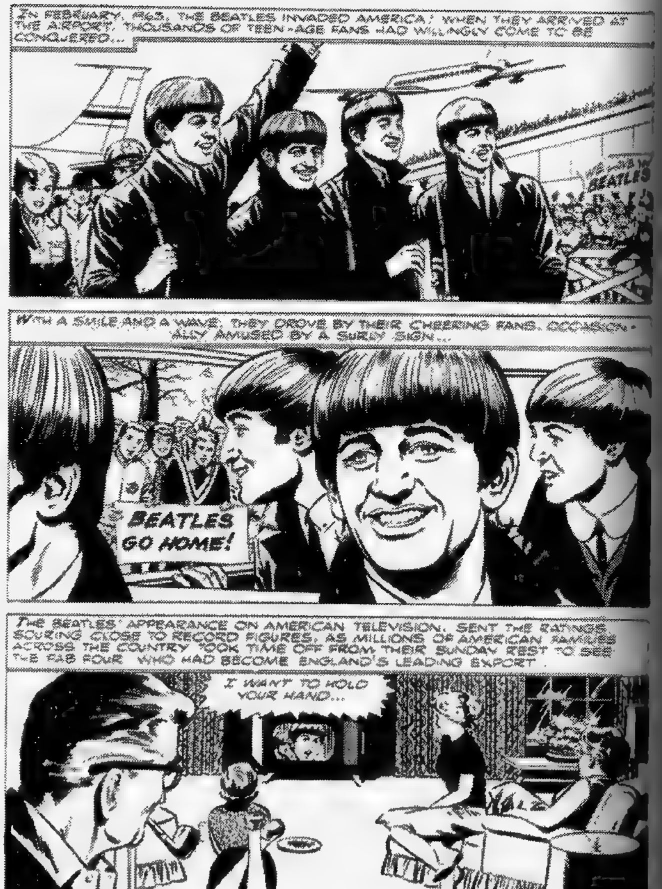
C.B. Do you have advice for amateur artists wantting to become pro?

J.S. Get a sound basic education and try to get training by working in a studio with an established artist. I have never worked in a studio, which I regretted. I'd like to stress that cartooning is a demanding profession--it is no place for the lazy. The deadlines are often hectic, but one does get a great sense of satisfaction from a job that is well done.

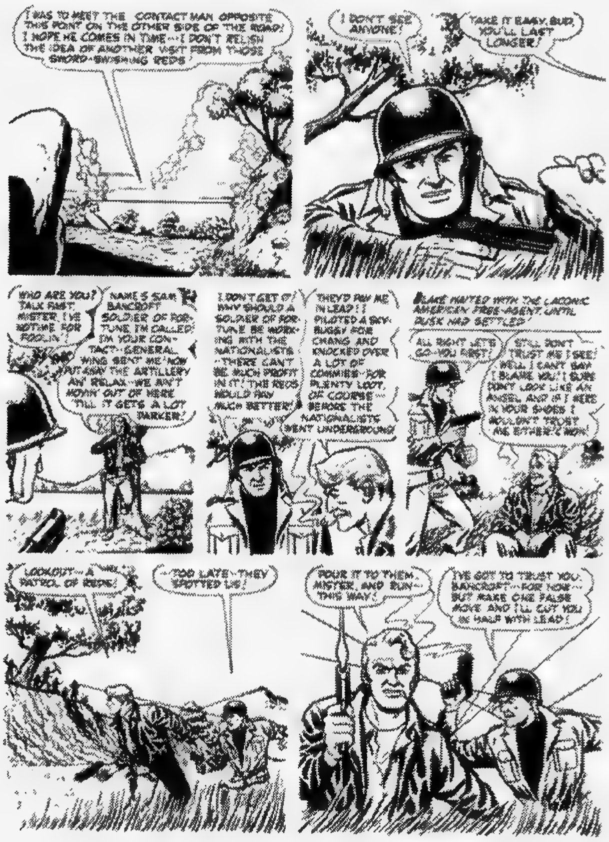
Best Regards,
Joe Sinnott

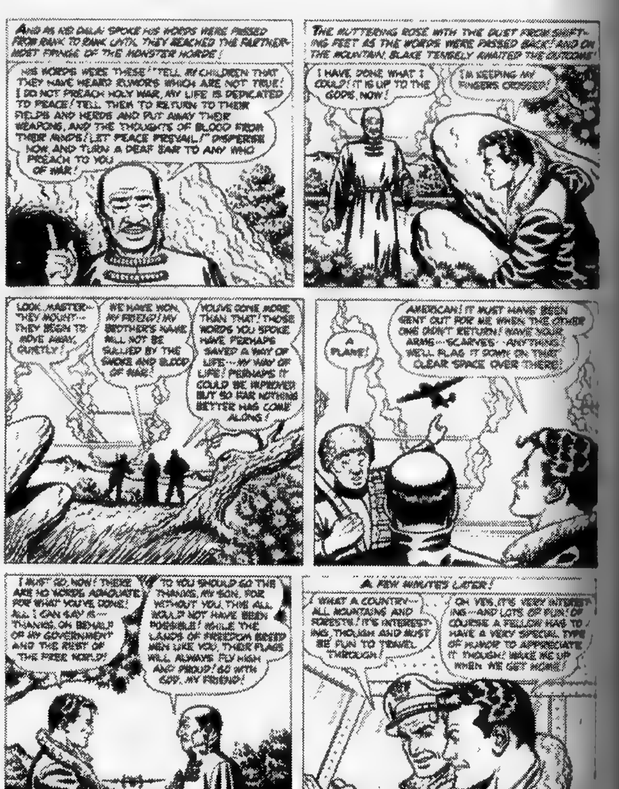



The Story of Pope John XXIII,
WHO WON OUR HEARTS
ONLY A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO, THE WORLD WAS GIVEN A NEW POPE! HE WAS TO TAKE THE PLACE OF ONE OF THE MOST HIGHLY REVERED PONTIFFS OF ALL TIME, POPE PIUS XII. FEW KNEW JOHN XXIII THEN. BUT THE WORLD KNOWS HIM NOW, FOR HE HAS WON OUR HEARTS.
HE HAS BECOME KNOWN AS A POPE WHO LIVES CLOSELY TO THE PEOPLE, WHO LOVES ALL PEOPLE AND YEARNS FOR THEM TO BE MEMBERS OF THE ONE, TRUE CHURCH.
IN 1959, POPE JOHN ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO CALL THE BISHOPS OF THE WORLD TO A MEETING IN ROME. THIS ECUMENICAL (EK-YOU-MEN-UH-CULL) COUNCIL WILL BEGIN SOON. IT IS EXPECTED TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHURCH EVENT OF THIS CENTURY.
Joe Sinnott


IN FEBRUARY, 1963, THE BEATLES INVADED AMERICA! WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE AIRPORT, THOUSANDS OF TEEN-AGE FANS HAD WILLINGLY COME TO BE CONQUERED...
WE LOVE Y
BEATLES
WITH A SMILE AND A WAVE, THEY DROVE BY THEIR CHEERING FANS, OCCASIONALLY AMUSED BY A SURLY SIGN...
BEATLES GO HOME!
THE BEATLES' APPEARANCE ON AMERICAN TELEVISION, SENT THE RATINGS SOARING CLOSE TO RECORD FIGURES, AS MILLIONS OF AMERICAN FAMILIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY TOOK TIME OFF FROM THEIR SUNDAY REST TO SEE THE FAB FOUR WHO HAD BECOME ENGLAND'S LEADING EXPORT.
I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND...

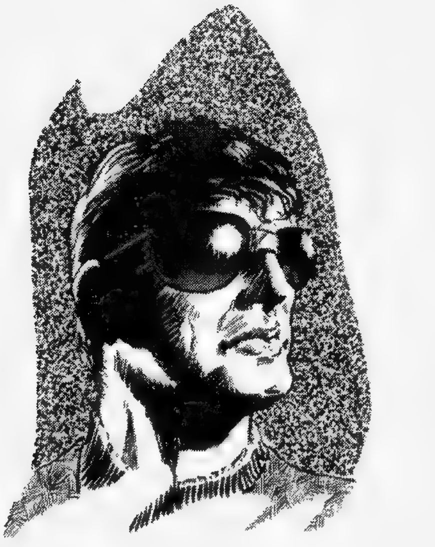
TOP: What Joe considers his straight material.


I WAS TO MEET THE CONTACT MAN OPPOSITE THIS POINT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD! I HOPE HE COMES IN TIME -- I DON'T RELISH THE IDEA OF ANOTHER VISIT FROM THOSE SWORD-SWISHING REDS
I DON'T SEE ANYONE!
TAKE IT EASY, BUD, YOU'LL LAST LONGER!
WHO ARE YOU? TALK FAST, MISTER, I'VE NO TIME FOR FOOLIN'!
NAME'S SAM BANCROFT, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE I'M CALLED! I'M YOUR CONTACT -- GENERAL WING SENT ME! NOW PUT AWAY THE ARTILLERY AN' RELAX -- WE AIN'T MOVIN' OUT OF HERE 'TILL IT GETS A LOT DARKER!
I DON'T GET IT! WHY SHOULD A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE BE WORKING WITH THE NATIONALISTS -- THERE CAN'T BE MUCH PROFIT IN IT! THE REDS WOULD PAY MUCH BETTER!
THEY'D PAY ME IN LEAD! I PILOTED A SKY-BUGGY FOR CHANG AND KNOCKED OVER A LOT OF COMMIES -- FOR PLENTY LOOT, OF COURSE -- BEFORE THE NATIONALISTS WENT UNDERGROUND!
BLAKE WAITED WITH THE LACONIC AMERICAN FREE-AGENT, UNTIL DUSK HAD SETTLED
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO -- YOU FIRST!
STILL DON'T TRUST ME, I SEE! WELL, I CAN'T SAY I BLAME YOU! I SURE DON'T LOOK LIKE AN ANGEL, AND IF I WERE IN YOUR SHOES I WOULDN'T TRUST ME EITHER! C'MON!
LOOKOUT -- A PATROL OF REDS!
-- TOO LATE -- THEY SPOTTED US!
POUR IT TO THEM, MISTER, AND RUN -- THIS WAY!
I'VE GOT TO TRUST YOU, BANCROFT -- FOR NOW -- BUT MAKE ONE FALSE MOVE AND I'LL CUT YOU IN HALF WITH LEAD!


AND AS HIS DALAI SPOKE HIS WORDS WERE PASSED FROM RANK TO RANK UNTIL THEY REACHED THE FARTHERMOST FRINGE OF THE MONSTER HORDE!
HIS WORDS WERE THESE: "TELL MY CHILDREN THAT THEY HAVE HEARD RUMORS WHICH ARE NOT TRUE! I DO NOT PREACH HOLY WAR, MY LIFE IS DEDICATED TO PEACE! TELL THEM TO RETURN TO THEIR FIELDS AND HERDS AND PUT AWAY THEIR WEAPONS, AND THE THOUGHTS OF BLOOD FROM THEIR MINDS! LET PEACE PREVAIL!" DISPERSE NOW AND TURN A DEAF EAR TO ANY WHO PREACH TO YOU OF WAR!
THE MUTTERING ROSE WITH THE DUST FROM SHIFTING FEET AS THE WORDS WERE PASSED BACK! AND ON THE MOUNTAIN, BLAKE TENSELY AWAITED THE OUTCOME!
I HAVE DONE WHAT I COULD! IT IS UP TO THE GODS, NOW!
I'M KEEPING MY FINGERS CROSSED!
LOOK, MASTER -- THEY MOUNT -- THEY BEGIN TO MOVE AWAY, QUIETLY!
WE HAVE WON, MY FRIEND! MY BROTHER'S NAME WILL NOT BE SULLIED BY THE SMOKE AND BLOOD OF WAR!
YOU'VE DONE MORE THAN THAT! THOSE WORDS YOU SPOKE HAVE PERHAPS SAVED A WAY OF LIFE -- MY WAY OF LIFE! PERHAPS IT COULD BE IMPROVED BUT SO FAR NOTHING BETTER HAS COME ALONG!
A PLANE!
AMERICAN! IT MUST HAVE BEEN SENT OUT FOR ME WHEN THE OTHER ONE DIDN'T RETURN! WAVE YOUR ARMS -- SCARVES -- ANYTHING! WE'LL FLAG IT DOWN ON THAT CLEAR SPACE OVER THERE!
I MUST GO, NOW! THERE ARE NO WORDS ADEQUATE FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE! ALL I CAN SAY IS -- THANKS, ON BEHALF OF MY GOVERNMENT AND THE REST OF THE FREE WORLD!
TO YOU SHOULD GO THE THANKS, MY SON, FOR WITHOUT YOU, THIS ALL WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE! WHILE THE LANDS OF FREEDOM BREED MEN LIKE YOU, THEIR FLAGS WILL ALWAYS FLY HIGH AND PROUD! GO WITH GOD, MY FRIEND!
A FEW MINUTES LATER!
WHAT A COUNTRY -- ALL MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS! IT'S INTERESTING, THOUGH AND MUST BE FUN TO TRAVEL THROUGH!
OH YES, IT'S VERY INTERESTING -- AND LOTS OF FUN! OF COURSE A FELLOW HAS TO HAVE A VERY SPECIAL TYPE OF HUMOR TO APPRECIATE IT THOUGH! WAKE ME UP WHEN WE GET HOME!

BOTTOM: From Joe's early action strip, KENT BLAKE

MEET
DON NEWTON



A grade school art teacher, who digs the world of comics....This Is Don Newton.

Creator of ama-strips "The Savage Earth" and "Vibra-Man"....This Is Don Newton.

Fan artist, of extreme merit....This Is Don Newton.

A friend and fellow comic collector....This Is Don Newton.

And with the article below....you guessed it - THIS IS DON NEWTON!

As a youngster, I guess comics were about the most exciting thing in the world for me. Probably, because for a dime they brought the whole world to my finger tips. When I reached high school however, my interests changed and I never touched another one 'till about three years ago.

It seems I'd always had the desire to draw a comic strip, so in 1967 I got ambitious and started to try and put one together. It didn't take long for me to realize how little I knew about black and white drawing (I'd painted for years, however.) and this prompted me to start reading "funny books" again.

My interest in comics soared and before long I was collecting "oldies" and buying "Rocket's Blast - Comic Collector". "RBCC" was also the first place I ever sent some art and had it published.

After doing several drawings for G.B. Love, we discussed the idea of a comic strip. "The Savage Earth" then came from a desire not to do another super-hero strip and also an appreciation for Raymond's "Flash Gordon".

I do the strip for my own enjoyment. (And I hope others) It carries no moral message or social comment... at least not intentionally.

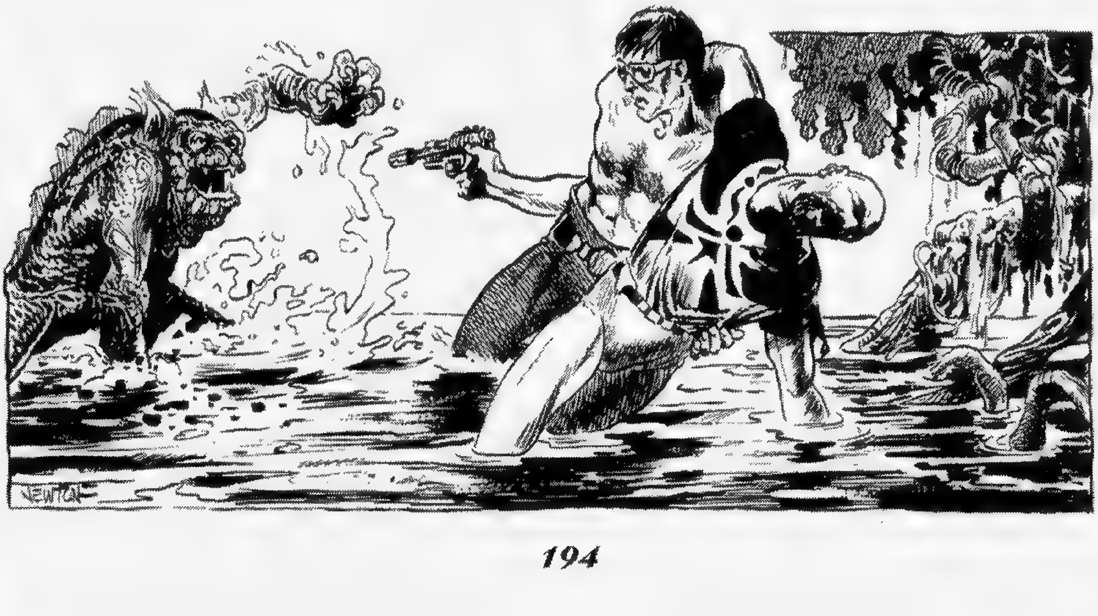
Quite a number of fans have asked me if I "swipe" and if so, who from? The answer is, no I don't. With the exception of the use of 3 or 4 photos, all my work is "off the top of my head", as are the drawings for this page. I enjoy working out a problem in anatomy and lighting and get no satisfaction in drawing from someone elses work. As a matter of interest; the drawing that I had the most trouble with, in the "Savage Earth", was a "simple" one... Freeze holstering his pistol in Chapter 7! It still doesn't look right.

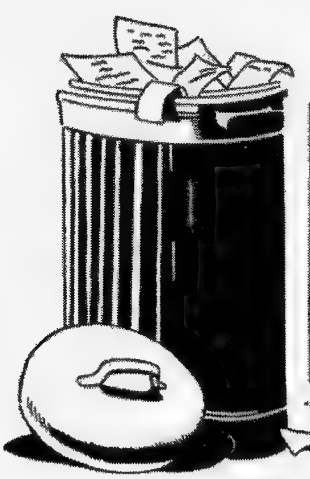
However, on the other hand, I do study good work and to my mind, Williamson, Frazetta and Adams (Neal) are the best in the business today.

Like everyone, I have my likes and dislikes in comics. Captain Marvel is my all time favorite superhero. Superman is the superhero most ruined over the years. The Batman of the '40's is one of the all time greats, but since then he's never been the same. Of the current crop of heros; I like Iron Man the best. In fact I'd enjoy drawing that strip.

As far as ultimate ambition in art; I suppose the thing I'd enjoy most would be painting covers or illustrating books. On the other hand, it's hard to say whether I'll ever get into this line of work. I've been teaching school for 10 years and I would want to be pretty sure of myself before I changed jobs.

In the meantime, doing "fan art" brings me pretty close to my ambitions and time permiting, I hope to keep it up for a good many years.





From the Circular File

Alright fans! Here's your chance to boost or knock COMIC CRUSADER. Each issue, I'll print the most intelligent letters I receive.

About ads - This is not an ad zine. Any ad you see here, has my personal recomendation. If you wish to place an ad, send me a copy of your zine and I'll send you the ad rates and the size your ad must be.

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BRUCE V. KALNINS
227 Empress Ave.
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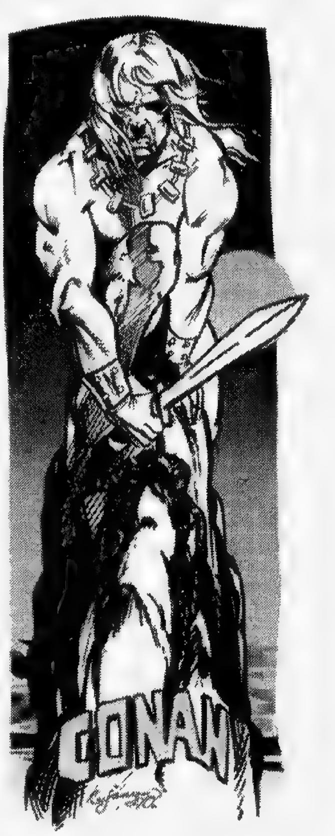
Canada.

I just can't get over the Steranko nude on the back cover of CC #8. A tremendous piece of art! It's simply fantastic! That has to be one of the best single illustrations I've seen in a fanzine in a long time. Now, let's get on with the rest of the issue.

Don Newton's cover was nice, but I doubt if anything will ever surpass Fantucchio's cover on CC #6. I didn't like the new title logo. The old one seemed to have a little bit of class to it. (Whatever that means!) Inside, the art was excellent, especially yours, Martin. I particularly enjoyed The Defender strip this issue, both artwise and story. With the added pages, a better sense of continuity is achieved while before, you had barely started reading it before it was finished for that issue. Again, I must compliment you on your art, because I thought you really out did yourself. I have a few criticisms, though, and one of these is the character of The Defender. I mean, does every superhero have to continually joke through every adventure? For example, when he was fighting the guard, near the end. If you're really exerting yourself and fighting for your life, you just don't have the energy and time to throw wisecracks right and left. Besides that, it's become a much overused cliché, what with every pro and ama hero having this wild sense of good humour. Another point, which I thought could have been changed, was the full page illustration at the end of the story. It was beautifully done and it had a very dramatic appeal, but as, you and I know, offset is very expensive and to include a full page illo, especially in a strip, is a bit of a waste to me. I wouldn't have minded so much anywhere else, but in a strip you want to advance the storyline as far as possible and to include as much dialogue, action and characterization as possible. (Considering how infrequently CC comes out) The same arguement goes true for the full page pic of The Defender at the beginning of the story. Am I mistaken or did Steve Ditko draw that? Sonn Foss' full page "Comic Types" was beautifully done and well worth the space that it occupied. I'm a great admirer of his and hope to see more of his work in the future. Another idea, which I don't like very much (Oh no! Here I go again) is the proposed alternating of the various strips you have lined up. Now that The Defender is finally gaining some pattern and is starting to "flow" rather than being presented in short choppy segments, you intend to introduce some other hero, which will definitely rob it of it's impact and sense of timing. How can you ever become interested in a character if you only read him twice a year or so. But then again, somebody might want variety so, like they say, you can't please all of the people all of the time. The rest of the art, in the issue was outstanding. Your entire art staff is one huge melting pot of talent; each one as fantastic as the next one. However, let me say that I am extremly glad you got hold of William Black, Anthony Kowalik and Jim Shull and I hope they remain forever as contributors. By the way, I've enjoyed William's and Jim's work in other zines, but this is the first I've heard of Tony. Is he a new addition to fandom? If he is, I'm sure glad he decided to come out of hiding.



Conan illo by...KLAUS JANSON

Article wise, The Parade was the highlight of the issue. Again Tom Fagan has demonstrated what a truly remarkable and gifted writer he is. As with the Con Issue, I felt as if I had actually participated in the festivities that occurred. The Heap article by Tom was very good also and who says history articles on comics have to be boring? Not me! Tom manages to instill a sense of adventure and mystery into the reader, which makes him feel as if he's in the midst of the action. By the way, the photographs accompanying the Parade article were superb!

I've always admired Dan Adkins, both as a penciller and inker, so it was no wonder that I greatly enjoyed the article on him. I have "The Wanderer" and "The Doorway", two strips which he did at Warren and I must say they're masterpieces. I completely sympathize with his attitude towards all the morons who keep rejoicing at the sound of their voices endlessly telling everyone that Dan Adkins swipes. Who really cares? If an artist is of sufficient merit as Dan Adkins and you, Martin, are, then I just don't see any point in the fact that he swipes. We all know that he can draw, so what does it really matter if he "borrows" art for one reason or another. This entire uproar, raised by certain members of fandom, seems as idiotic to me as the people who started all the fuss. You said it perfectly, Martin, when you told your critics to go to hell! I wish they'd stay there too.

The fan artist's interview is always informative and interesting, as it was this issue with Dennis Fujitake.

I realize this letter is rather long, but when I review a zine, I want to give the editor the best possible criticism that I know. You may not agree with everything I've said here, but I'm only telling it the way I see it. I'm certainly glad you're going to continue publishing, because it's really appreciated. May Comic Crusader and you and your wife prosper and live a long life.

THANKS, BRUCE. YOUR LETTER WAS LONG, BUT YOU HIT ON SOME INTERESTING POINTS. AS FOR "CRUSADER'S" LOGO CHANGE, THAT'S BECAUSE ARTISTS OTHER THAN STAFF ARTISTS OFTEN DO COVERS, THEY USE THE LOGO THEY FEEL GOES BEST WITH THEIR ART. THE REGULAR LOGO IS THE ONE USED ON ISSUE 7's COVER. THOUGH RICH BUCKLER ISN'T A STAFF ARTIST I ASKED HIM TO USE IT. I CAN'T ALWAYS DO THIS. AS FOR THE DEFENDER'S DIALOGUE...I HAVE HIM SPEAK THE WAY I WOULD, IN A SIMILAR SITUATION. WHEN HE FOUGHT THAT GUARD, HE WASN'T REALLY EXERTING HIMSELF. REMEMBER, HE IS A SUPER HERO AND HE DOES HAVE A BIT MORE STAMINA THAN AN ORDINARY HUMAN BEING. THE FULL PAGER WAS LED UP TO AND USED FOR A DRAMATIC ENDING. I PLANNED TO CONTINUE THE STORY, AT JUST THIS POINT, SO YOU'LD WANT TO READ THE NEXT CHAPTER. IN THIS WAY, YOU'LL REMEMBER THE IMPACT UNTIL YOU NEXT READ THE DEFENDER. I'M ALTERNATING A STRIP WITH THE DEFENDER BECAUSE I WANT A LITTLE VARIETY AND BECAUSE I COULDN'T POSSIBLY DRAW A 6 PAGE STRIP EACH ISSUE. I ALSO BELIEVE THE FAN ARTISTS, WHO CONTRIBUTE TO "CRUSADER" ARE THE BEST AROUND, AND I WANT TO SHOWCASE THEIR MATERIAL.

CHAMPION.....NO.7 35¢

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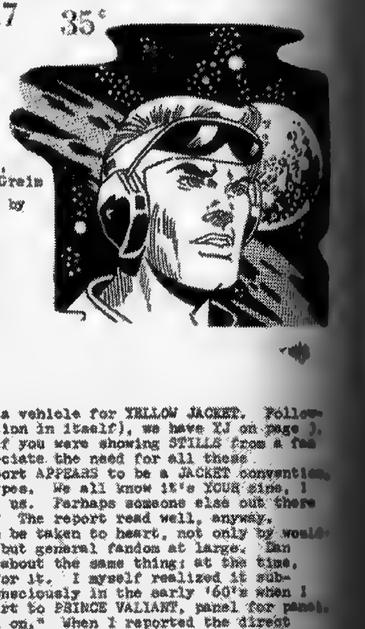

RONN FOSS
2358 Menalto
E. Palo Alto, Calif. 94303

To me, Crusader #8 looks like a vehicle for YELLOW JACKET. Following the well-done cover (justification in itself), we have YJ on page 3, page 4 (twice), and page 5. Now, if you were showing STILLS from a fan made film or some such, I can appreciate the need for all these (4 JACKETS in 5 pages), but the report APPEARS to be a JACKET convention, attended by a few other costumed types. We all know it's YOUR zine, I just wish you wouldn't keep telling us. Perhaps someone else out there thinks you could have more Y-J pix? The report read well, anyway.

ADKINS; now THERE'S a piece to be taken to heart, not only by would-be illustrators and their critics, but general fandom at large. Dan wrote me sometime around '65, just about the same thing; at the time, he felt the readers weren't ready for it. I myself realized it subconsciously in the mid-50's, and consciously in the early '60's when I compared works of Frazetta and Kubert to PRINCE VALIANT, panel for panel. The list, as they say, "goes on and on." When I reported the direct tracing of an entire panel, line for line, from a FLASH GORDON by Bill Lignante in PHANTOM, Bill Harris replied he wasn't aware of the earlier works; this appeared in COMMICOLLECTOR #10, I believe, '63.

The point is, of course, that when an illustrator needs something like a Boeing 747 or the Eiffel Tower, the best referance isn't a photo of the thing, but rather an illo done by another artist. Sad thing is that so many comic illustrators get carried away with it, like the group that put out the one-shot (?) monster comic mag, copying Frazetta and Williamson right down the line. I really fail to see how they can have any sence of satisfaction whatever, when it's all done, knowing that all they did was rearrange the panels.

Although I'd have to take exception to your phrase "creative" swiping, Dan tells it like it is, when he says some "artists" can't even swipe well. The fact remains, that unless one has himself drawn panel after panel, dozens upon dozens of strips comprising hundreds and even thousands of figures, he honestly can't REALLY know what it's all about. Far be it from me to critisize something about which I know nothing, like say tight-rope walking or stunt car driving, and I wish comic art critics would give a second thought to their slings and arrows. I say they should TRY it before knocking it, and THEN they might see how easy it ISN'T. I'm of the opinion that just about anyone can draw a passable SINGLE figure; some are really good at it (like Jack Gaughan and Fantucchio)...but when it comes to figure after figure, panel after panel, strip after strip - THAT, kiddies, is no simple matter.

Ah, the HEAP - we see him about the same proportionate size on not just 1 or 2, but ALL 4 of the pages comprising the article; for shame.

(continued next page)

of the first things pros will tell you about comic art, is that size
figures must vary from shot to shot.
who did the Defender splash ala Ditko, you or D. Fujitake? If
self, well done. If the latter...well, done. Mmm, Steranko is
ting down with it; groovey.

PS YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT YELLOW JACKETS ALL OVER THE PLACE. I DO DIG
CHARACTER AND PERHAPS WENT A BIT OVERBOARD. MOST OF THE FANS SEEMED
IT THOUGH. IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME, ABOUT THE PROPORTIONATE
OF THE HEAP ART. I'LL TRY AND REMEMBER THAT IN THE FUTURE. THE
NDER ILLO WAS DONE BY DITKO ALA DITKO. HE FORGOT TO SIGN IT.

PARAGON
•ILLUSTRATED•
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PARAGON #1 features a 16 pg Sci-fi strip..THE STARMASTERS..by Wm. Black, photos and article on Vincent Price in THE HOUSE OF USHER, the GREAT CAPTAIN MARVEL CONTROVERSY, Nick Fury, and much, much more!!

Featuring CREEPY & EERIE artist Wm Black

PARAGON # 2 spotlights a new Wm. BLACK strip.. SYNESTHESIA, THE GIRL FROM LSD!!..the conclusion of the STARMASTER epic, BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25th CENTURY art and article by Stu Smith, Martin Greim on THE CRIMSON AVENGER...ROGER CORMAN'S THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM with photos of VINCENT PRICE AND BARBARA STEELE! Over 40 pages, photo off-set, wrap-around, mailed flat in envelope! COLOR COVER!!

ALFONSO
Melrose Ave
al 261, Quebec.
Canada.

I thought I'd comment on your superb 8th issue. The cover by Newton
the best I've seen on CC. Let's hope the much publicized cover of
live up to my expectations. That article on the BATMAN parade in
, Vermont and what happened afterwards was really cool. I'd like to
that I won an argument with the information to be found in that
. The argument concerned whether mature people read comic books.
flipped over the Adkins article and the title to what Adkins had to
my aching...etc." really had me howling, humour wise. This may be
bunch, but the Adkins drawing on the first page of the article, re-
me of Ditko. Did Adkins include a swipe to spite all his tormentors?
well...

Fujitake's all right, I guess and I think his Blue Beetle illo was sharp.
Heap...one of Fagan's better articles and not once did he mention
that all the origins contradicted each other. This is something
writer would be apt to do. Fagan simply treated it as something
, and not worth mentioning.

page by Foss seemed BOCHY and rushed.
Defender, what art, what inking, what plot. Am I correct in as-
that the oppening splash was drawn by Ditko? Facial-wise and shading
your art really resembles Wood and the last panel of the second-to-
page of the story reminded me of Adkins. In a nutshell it was fantas-
ecure.

, hah. What's this? Black Cat in the nude? Next I'll be seeing
minus vestments. Seriously, the back cover appealed to my sense
, but I urge you to refrain from this habit in the future. Not
I've got the Mayflower parked outside, but I feel this gives fandom a
amazed name, especially up here, where comic collecting is carried
the silent minority. I promised to bring CC in for my Literature class
did not want to leave #8 at home, since it was one of your better
, so I (regretfully) took out my India Ink bottle and drew a bathing
her. Never the less CC was greeted with approval by my (female)
, who referred to it as 'camp' and passed it on to another teacher
reminded her of her childhood days and heroes. I passed CC on to
of my friends, who were plunged into confusion, since many of them
touched a comic book in years.

A BATHING SUIT ON STERANKO'S BLACK CAT! YOU WON AN ARGUMENT
ING MATURE PEOPLE READING COMIC BOOKS! I FIND BOTH STATEMENTS
BELIEVE. (Give me strength....ed.)

F. L. WATKINS
Box 110
Mason City, Illinois. 62664

Comic Crusader #8 arrived a couple of days ago, and permit me to say, it was a very pleasant surprise. Speaking in all honesty, it is always a source of amazement that you can make each CC better than the previous.

Your cover, of course, was terrific; anything by Don is. and, oh yes, congratulations, Don. A long and happy marriage to you.

Sleepy, Dan Defender receives congratulations.

Your Defender strip was great; enlarged page count and absence does make the heart grow fonder. At last he's getting some action, and a halfway decent plot line. However, on page four of the strip, you waste two panels describing a device The Defender used; did they do this on STAR TREK? when a sheriff picks up a gun to shoot an outlaw, does he explain what the gun is, what it does and how he uses it? Of course not! The scene could have just as easily been done without Brawn asking about the weapon. It was illogical to stop fighting to give a lecture on Decibel Disrupting... watch it, how 'bout?

The article on the Halloween - Batman Parade was extremely interesting; especially the photos. I vote to continue articles of this sort. That Batman illustration by William Black was very, very good. He drew him better than many of his pro artists have.

Again, I loved the pictures. All interesting and all reproduced clearly. And Cowd, there really is a Poison IVY!

Your article on Dan Adkins hit the right spot; even as his did. Who cares if he swipes? I mean, you could call drawing a picture from a model copying. It is the way that it is executed that counts. If it is a complete, line for line swipe, then I am bothered; if it is (as you said) a creative swipe, then I don't see any harm in it. I'd rather have an enjoyable swipe than a disgusting original, many times.

Fan-presentation page was interesting; keep that feature. On the letter pages, you reproduced a picture of Dejah Thoris. I'm sorry to say I have not gotten Champion 7 yet, to see the full drawing. Anyway, though, you said that Dejah Thoris ran around half-naked all the time in ERB's books; that's true, but I'm certain that she didn't pose like cheesecake.(such as you have her in, in that picture) (SHE DID FOR JOHN CARTER - ed.) Dejah Thoris was presented by ERB as a stately, proud woman. You made her look like some cheap topless waitress posing for a girlie magazine.

The Heap article was interesting enough in its own right, though I wasn't really enthralled with Big-H. Keep up History's Heroes. And speaking of articles, where's Mongo Mania? I miss it.

Ronn Foss' drawing...hoh, well....er...Ronn Foss really isn't one of my favourites; his style doesn't really "turn me on."

And then the back cover. Like I've said before, that Steranko is one hell of an artist! That girl (Black Cat, wasn't it?) was bee-ootiful!! End comment acceptable for publication.

ON THE DEFENDER. PERHAPS, WHEN A SHERIFF PICKS UP A GUN, YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS. HOWEVER, WHEN THE DEFENDER USED HIS DECIBEL DISRUPTER, BRAWN DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS AND NEITHER WOULD THE READER, UNLESS I EXPLAINED IT. IT WASN'T ILLOGICAL TO STOP FIGHTING EITHER, AS ALL THE SNOW GROUNDS HAD BEEN WIPED OUT BY THE AVALANCHE, CAUSED BY THE DISRUPTER. AS FOR DEJAH, YOU ONLY SAW THE FIGURE ON THE LETTER PAGE. THE BACKGROUND WASN'T SHOWN. THAT POSE DOES FIT WITH THE BACKGROUND. BESIDES, SHE LOOKED PRETTY PROUD AND STATELY TO ME.

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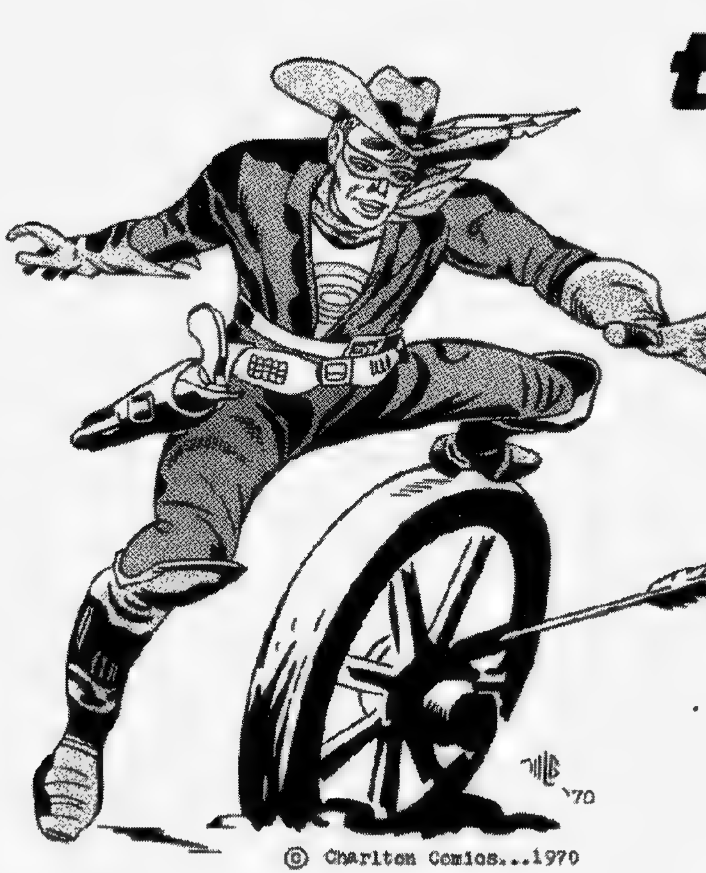


the saga of BULLS EYE

Written by
BOB COSGROVE

ART BY: William Black & Martin L. Greim

Featuring: JACK KIRBY

© Charlton Comics...1970

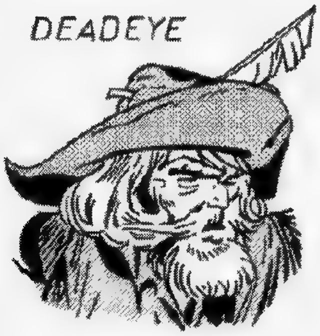
Today's comic book readers know Jack Kirby as the "action king," a grand master of superherodom, who has profoundly affected the direction of the current comic book. Certainally Jack, more than anyone else, has developed the modern super hero. Back in the forties, when the name Simon and Kirby was as well known as "Atlas" or "DC," the king was already a leader in the super hero line. But not many people are aware of the fantastic versatility, the amazing range, that Jack displayed in those years. He did excellent horror material, and some of his nicest work was –– of all things — romance comics. Another Kirby forte was the Western. Perhaps the best known Kirby Western was BOYS' RANCH, which saw press in 1950. BOYS' RANCH #3, especially, is a treasured issue amongst collectors. The reason being, the tremendous art and an outstanding story titled..."Mother Delilah".

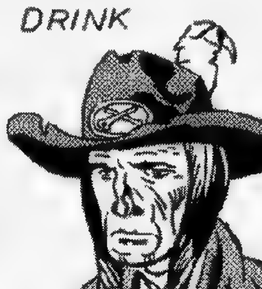
However, Simon and Kirby also produced another Western comic which equalled, and in some cases even surpassed BOYS' RANCH. The name of this comic was BULLS EYE. No comic book ever had more unusual features. For one thing, it was actually published by Simon and Kirby themselves, under the publishing name of Mainline Publications. In addition to BULLS EYE, Mainline pubbed FOXHOLE, POLICE TRAP, and IN LOVE, the titles of which are self explanatory. One can only ruefully speculate what might have happened if the team had gained total publishing control, for an extended period of time. Unfortunatly, Mainline folded, and the final issues of BULLS EYE, issues 6 and 7, were published by the Charlton Comics group.

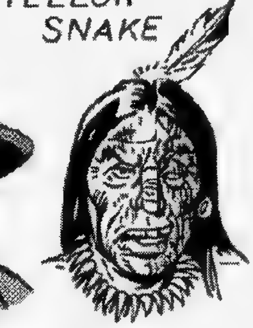
The saga of BULLS EYE began when a young man turned to his father, the famous Deadeye Dick, and asked him to save his infant grandson. The town of Dead Center was under attack by the savage Indian renegade Yellow Snake, who was determined to massacre every last member of the community. As the baby's parents accepted their doom, Deadeye Dick made a daring break through Indian lines, their infant son in his arms.

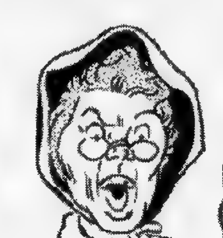
Riding hard and fast, Deadeye loses his pursuers, and hides for days in the desert. When he decides it is safe, he returns to the settlement, now a blackened smouldering graveyard. There, he meets and befriends an Indian scout, Long Drink, who has retired from the U.S Army. Fulfilling a pledge to the baby's parents, Deadeye teaches the boy to shoot with deadly accuracy. Eventually, his prowess reached the point where he earned the nickname of BULLS EYE. Oddly enough, his real name was never revealed.

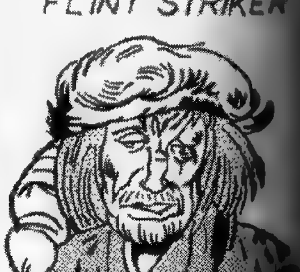
When BULLS EYE was old enough to fend for himself, Deadeye set out to revenge the massacre of the settlers. Eluding Long Drink, in whose care he had been left, BULLS EYE follows Deadeye. When he catches up with his grandfather, he is just in time to witness him treacherously murdered by Yellow Snake, whom Deadeye had wanted to duel. Even as his lifeless body crashed to the harsh earth, the young lad snatched up his grandfather's rifle and with phenomonal accuracy, shoots a bullet into the barrel of Yellow Snake's pistol, just as the Indian was about to shoot him. His face mangled and bloody from











the resulting explosion, the furious Yellow Snake prepares to kill the boy, but is prevented by his own superstitous warriors, who, amazed by the lad's marksmanship, feel that the great spirit does not want the boy to die. Insistant on revenge, Yellow Snake orders BULLS EYE held spread-eagled, and then ruthlessly plunges a white-hot branding iron into the young flesh of the lad's chest. "This symbol shall you wear forever on your chest--so I may know you when you grow old enough for me to kill you!" screamed the evil savage. Merciful unconciousness replaced pain, as Yellow Snake snarled, "When I see you one day again, I shall drive a spear through the center of this symbol." This symbol was a target!

Hours later, the figure stirred, his eyes scanning the lonely plane and the buzzards circling above the corpse of his last living relative.

He buried the old man, and exhausted, crawled home to Long Drink. He did not know that his ordeal was not yet at an end.

While still a youth, BULLS EYE was framed for murder and armed robbery during an infrequent visit to the local town of Longhorn Junction. For this reason, he adopted a dual identity. BULLS EYE became a masked figure. An open shirt revealed his scar, crimson against the brown of his shirt and pants. On his head he wore a green, feathered cap. A red mask concealed his face. In his other identity, he was a seller of pots and pans. Only Long Drink knew that the tired looking nag that pulled Panhandle Pete's wagon sometimes abandoned its hat and harness for the saddle, whenever BULLS EYE required Buckshot's speed.

And so, the youth, BULLS EYE, rides off into the sunset, in quest of justice.

It was BULLS EYE the man who signed on as an army scout, and thus came face to face with Yellow Snake. A rifle roars, and Yellow Snake's bullet flys towards the scarred chest of his hated foe. But swifter than that bullet is the lightning speed of BULLS EYE's knife, which finds its way to Yellow Snake's heart. BULLS EYE still lived, and having escaped Yellow Snake's bullet, vengeance was his.

Thus ended the first issue. Like many Simon and Kirby productions, it was not a duet. Jack drew detailed layouts and some pencil work, and the team wrote an excellent story, but a lesser light assisted in the penciling and the inking. Only the cover and one of the splash panels were solo Simon and Kirby.

A similar division of labor occured with the second issue. In this case, the pure work was the cover, and the last story, a humorous one entitled "Grand Prize." In this adventure, BULLS EYE takes part in a marksmanship contest, intentionally blows the final event, and learns to his joy, that the prize was the hand of a very ugly young lady. He makes fast tracks though, when the girl's brothers take pity on the runner-up and bring out their other sister.

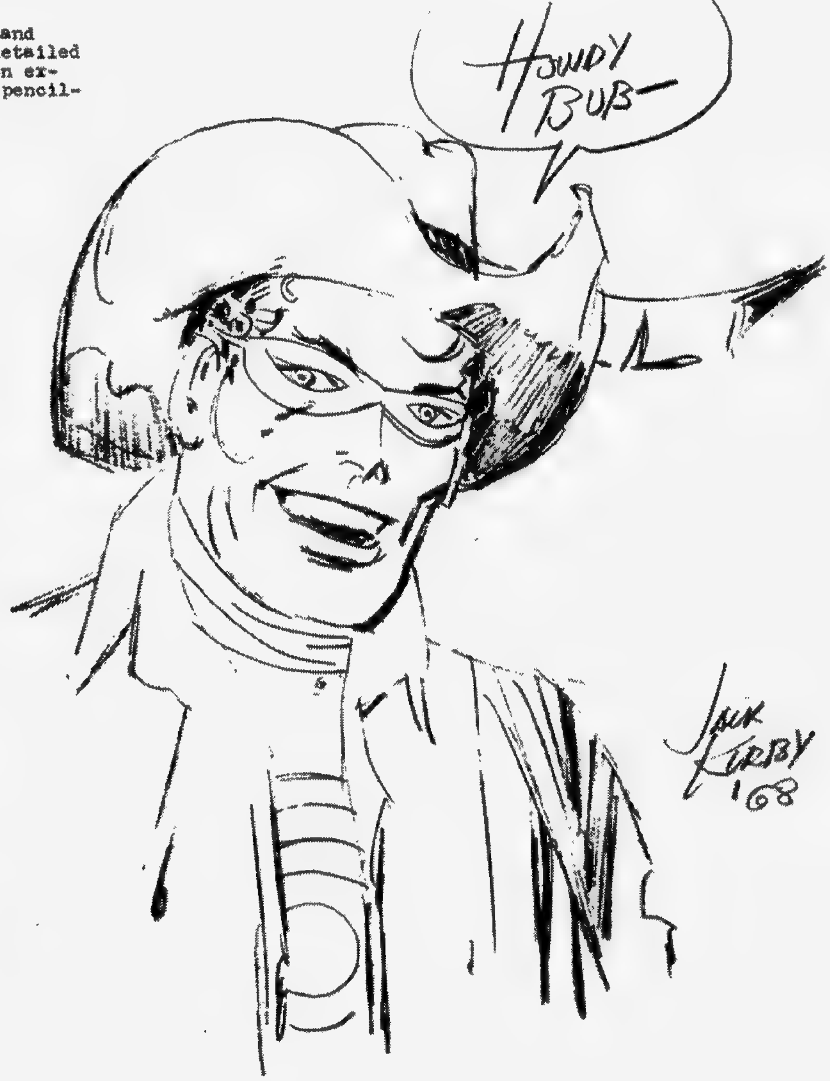
The cover of the second issue is perhaps worthy of mention, as it repeats the idea of a splash panel in issue one. It portrays BULLS EYE leaning off his galloping stead, rifle held over his back, looking into a mirror and shooting the Indian behind him. As he also wears a grinning smile on his face, the effect is the opposite of the desired one. It makes it appear as though BULLS EYE regards killing as a game, and loves nothing better than to pick off the redskins as daily sport. Actually, BULLS EYE was friendly with many Indians.

By issue #3, BULLS EYE was done entirely by Simon and Kirby. Also, the book now carried a one-page short feature by another artist, entitled "The Adventures of Sheriff Shorty, and Dexter Porter, the Smiling Undertaker." [illegible]! Issue #3 probably was the worst written, although the writing is still very good.

This time BULLS EYE ropes a Devil Bird (Pterdactyle) and poses as a ghost, to drive superstitous criminals away from Dead Center. This last story features a memorable one page fight scene done the way only Jack can draw them.

Issue #4 shows signs of an assistant touching up the art, but mainly, this issue is Simon and Kirby also. This issue is probably the least memorable of the BULLS EYE books. The first story has BULLS EYE saving a man from a lynch mob and then exposing Steve Mason, the man who framed the mob's would be victim. The second BULLS EYE story is a typical Simon and Kirby humor piece, featuring a whacky old lady named Grandma Tomahawk, who is determined to rid her "wicked, sinful town" of wicked, sinful saloons, even if she has to use an axe to do it. A crooked saloon keeper named Josh Seaton decides to arrange the old lady's timely demise, but BULLS EYE thwarts the attempt and fools the townspeople into believing that their women are all crack shots. Unfortunately for him, the forerunners of Women's Liberation spy his mask, and, not knowing friend from felon, begin shooting at him. Exit BULLS EYE, stage hurridly.

Superbly illustrated, Issue #5 has the faint hint of a "put-on". The first story is of little consequence, but in it, BULLS EYE meets the "Pinto People," who turn out to be Indians with white splotches who can run with amazing speed. BULLS EYE also meets and makes friends with his Indian counterpart, "Eagle-Eye," the "sharpshooting warrior." The story ends with Eagle-Eye killing a mountain lion that was about to attack BULLS EYE, and the closing blurb promises that "BULLS EYE has yet to see more of young Eagle-Eye's fancy shootin'! The young brave has come into his life to stay and share his thrilling adventures! Don't miss the next exciting issue ...when BULLS EYE meets up with Mother '44!" He didn't, naturally. Mother '44 was probably the original version of Grandma Tomahawk, whom BULLS EYE had already encountered in issue #4. As for Eagle-Eye, who had come into



A SPECIAL VOTE OF THANKS GOES TO LEN WEIN, FOR SUPPLYING THE KIRBY BULLS EYE ILLO AND FOR HIS HELP IN OBTAINING INFORMATION FOR THIS ARTICLE.

BULLS EYE's life "to stay," he was never heard from again. See what one could get away with in those pre-letterool days?

The second story in issue five had BULLS EYE meeting "Major Calamity" in Doom Town. The good Major was the only man found alive after a Sioux raid on Fort Shay. Later, when his entire command was massacred by Dakotas, in the Black Hills, only the Major survived. He left the service, but rumors of disaster followed him. Wherever he went, townspeople feared that death would strike, thus earning him the name "Major Calamity.." When news arrives that Big Red Devlin and his gang are riding into town, BULLS EYE talks the haunted Major into organizing the towns defense. With BULLS EYE's assistance, the gang is defeated, and the Major saves the town. The danger over, the Major hitches a ride out of town on a peddler's wagon. Says the driver, "The Name is Panhandle Pete. I sell household supplies!" Before the Major can reply, there is a sickening crack, as one of the wagon wheels splinters and falls off, pitching the duo, amidst the supplies, to the hard earth below. "Calamity's my name. They call me Major Calamity...Dag Nab it!" Chuckles Pete, "Now Who'd ever have GUESSED it!"

The next issue of BULLS EYE was one of the two best drawn issues, with all of the BULLS EYE stuff being pure Simon and Kirby. However, fate stepped in, in a sinister conspiracy to ruin the magazine. First of all, Simon and Kirby had sold the magazine to the new Charlton Comics Group. The coloring became almost as bad as some of the current work over at Marvel. The paper quality dropped disasterously. If this alone was not enough to make any fan cry, the big Comics Code sticker appeared at the top of the magazine. Oddly enough, the seal had appeared before, on issue four, but not on issue five. It was as if Major Calamity was back, lurking out of sight.

The first story was entitled "Tomahawks for Two," and it was excellent. In it, BULLS EYE, and a mangy scout named Flint Striker are captured by Indians. He soon becomes aware of a conflict which exists between the cheifs twin sons. One, the Scalp Taker, demands BULLS EYE's death. The other, the peace-loving Prophet, goads Scalp Taker into a Tomahawk fight with BULLS EYE. BULLS EYE had met the Prophet once before, saving his life. Asking him why he had not acted to save himself, BULLS EYE listened for the Prophet's reply. "Within me speaks the voice of the Great Spirit, who knows all things! He has told me WHEN I will die. It is NOT this day--"

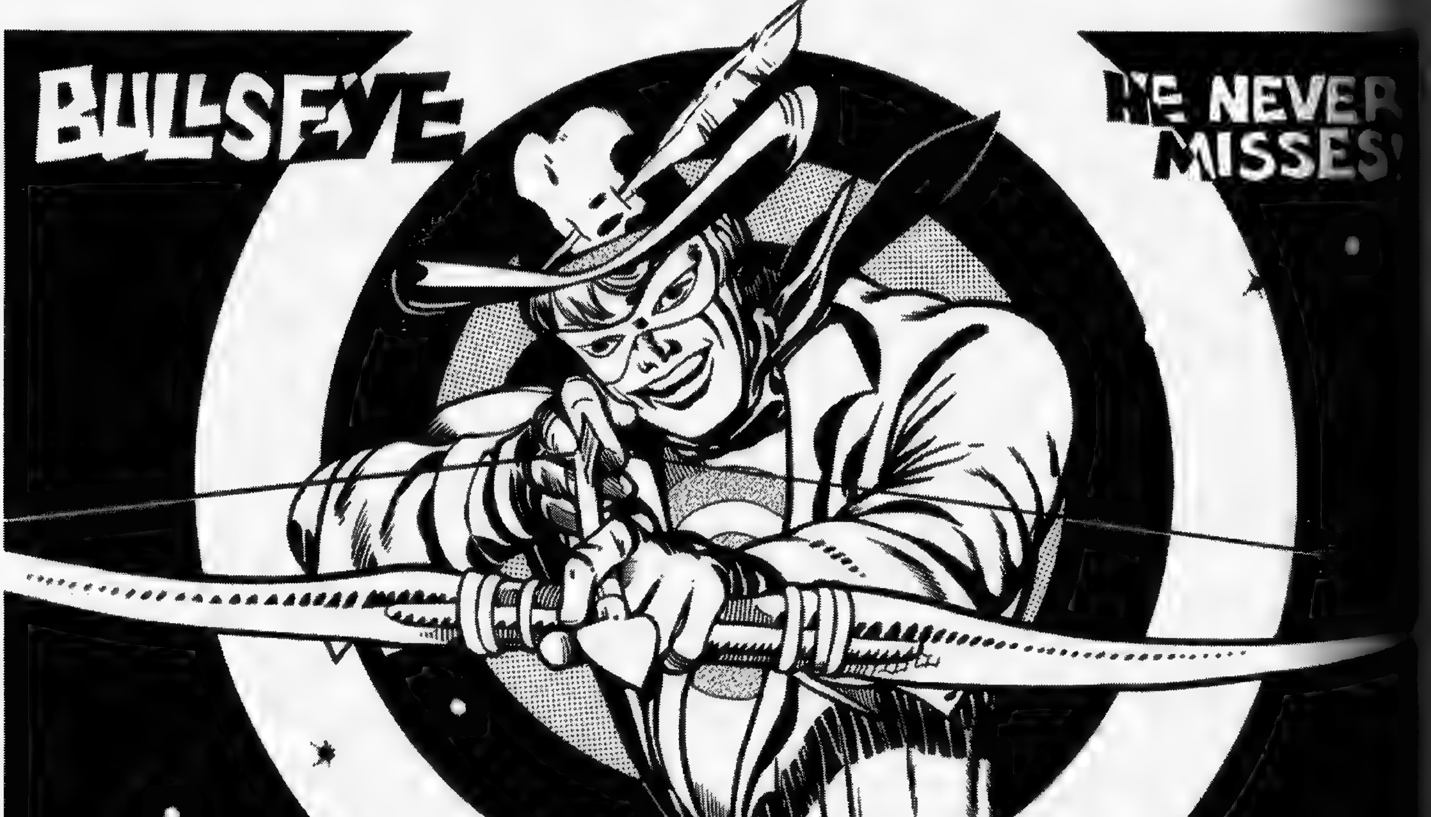
"I'll bet you've figured out the date, the place, and the hour--" returns BULLS EYE, who at that time, was in his Panhandle Pete identity.

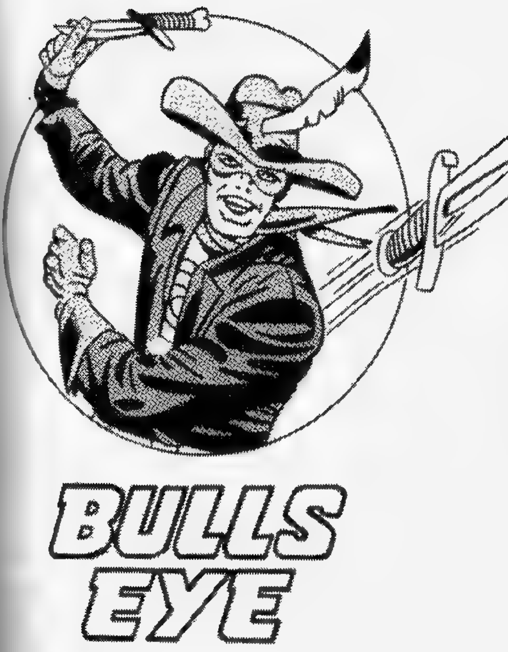
"That is so. I will die in battle--CALLING YOUR TRUE NAME!" BULLS EYE had no time to reminisce, however, for he was now involved in a tomahawk battle for his life. He really had nothing to worry about, though, for the all-powerful was looking over him. The Great Spirit, you ask? No, the Comics Code, of course. Deciding that Tomahawks were nasty, dangerous things that shouldn't be employed, least of all in Tomahawk fights, the CCA took the liberty of whiting out the Tomahawks. Thus, the Scalp Taker swings, BULLS EYE dodges, nothing strikes anything, yet the earth beneath him is torn assunder from the mighty blow. Eight panels of a magnificent fight scene--the only problem is, that without the Tomahawks, it looks a little ridiculous. At any rate, BULLS EYE overcomes Scalp Taker without killing him, and earns his freedom, as well as Flint Striker's.

After a brief, well done interlude, entitled "BULLS EYE and the Killer Horse!" BULLS EYE learns of the "COMING of the SIOUX!" The Sioux are led by Crazy Horse, "the bold and crafty military tactician who will one day conceive for Sitting Bull the plan that will trap General Custer and his men." Crazy Horse seeks to ally his forces with the Scalp Taker, but BULLS EYE, learning of his schemes, approaches the wigwam to overhear Scalp Taker arguing with the gentle Prophet who maintains that to ride with Crazy Horse would bring disaster to their people. Incensed, Scalp Taker raises his Tomahawk (yes gang, they left it in this time) to strike his brother down, but BULLS EYE rushes in and knocks him out. The Prophet calmly removes his clothes and dawns the garb of his war-like brother.

"Crazy Horse and his Sioux MUST be driven from this territory! Then our Tribe will know years of peace and plenty!" claims the now ferocious looking Prophet, who goes forth to lead his people into battle. The Prophet is successful, but the cost is high. Flint Striker and BULLS EYE find him blood-spattered on the field of battle. "I can not see the Great Spirit--" he gasps to his friends, "But his voice softens the bite of this pain--Thus says the voice--I have given you a host of warriors to lead you to my door, and at the door--a last friend--He who is called "Eye of the Bull..." With these words, the clairvoyant expired.

BULLS EYE left, haunted by the strange Indian, and pondering ANOTHER prediction of the Prophet--that he would live twice. One day, Panhandle Pete encountered a ghost--standing yards away from him, stood the Prophet. It was only after rushing up to him, to verify his eyes, that the truth dawned on Pete. The brave before him was Scalp Taker, in the clothes of his dead brother.



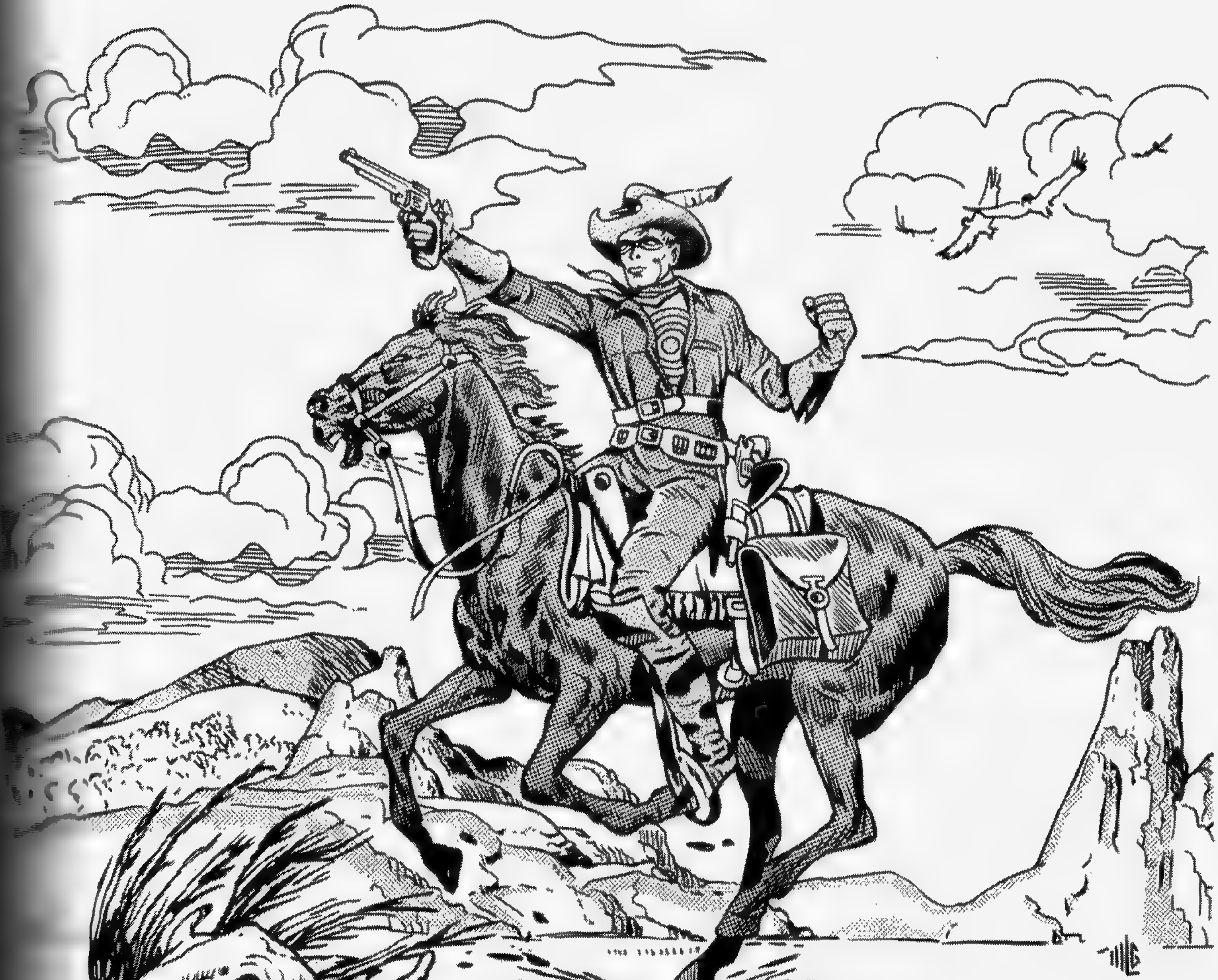


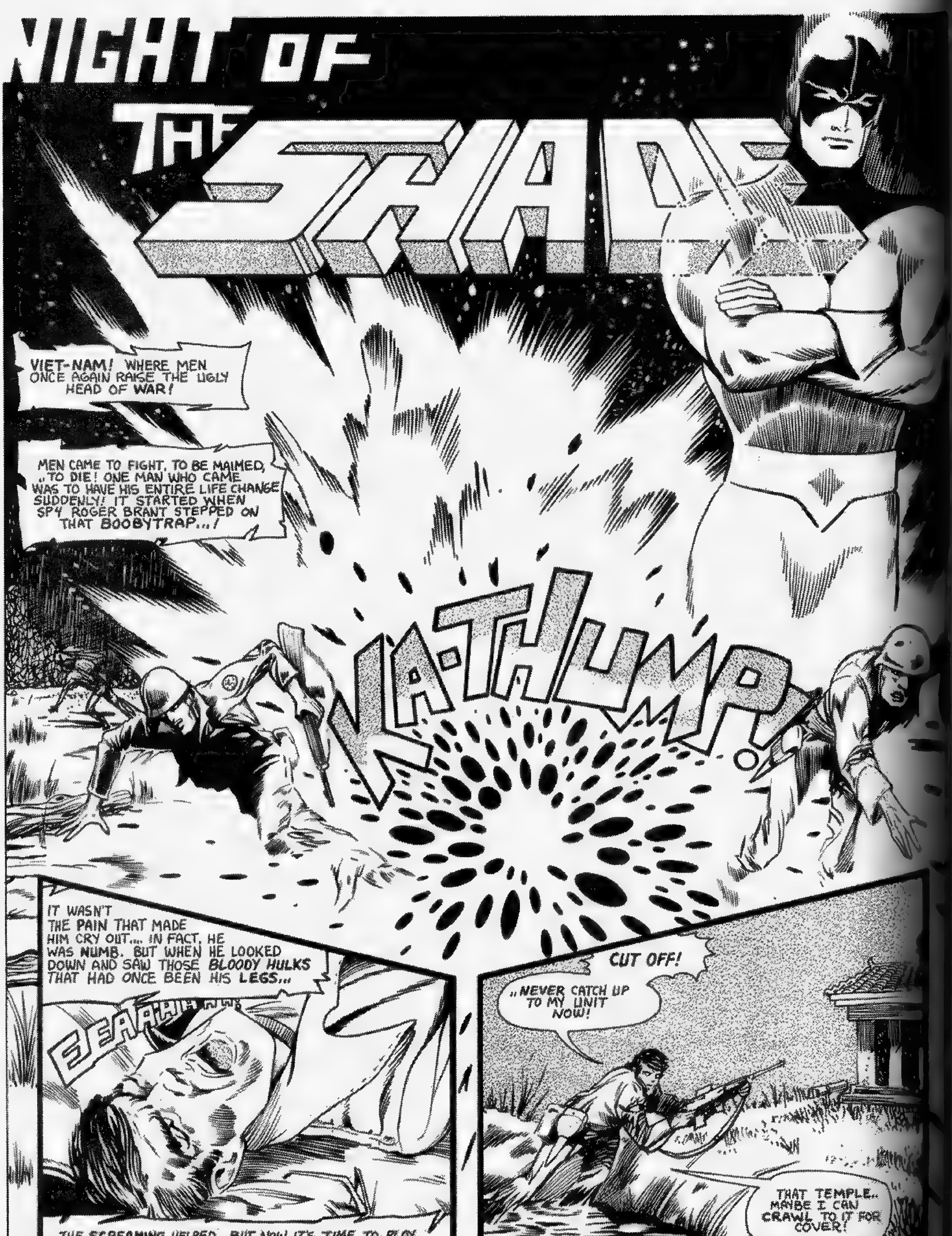
"The Prophet still lives--" said the transformed brave. "It is Scalp Taker and his ways that are gone! There is no wisdom or justice in the tomahawk. A man must listen only to the voice of the Great Spirit--the voice of peace." Thus ended the strange adventure of the twin brothers.

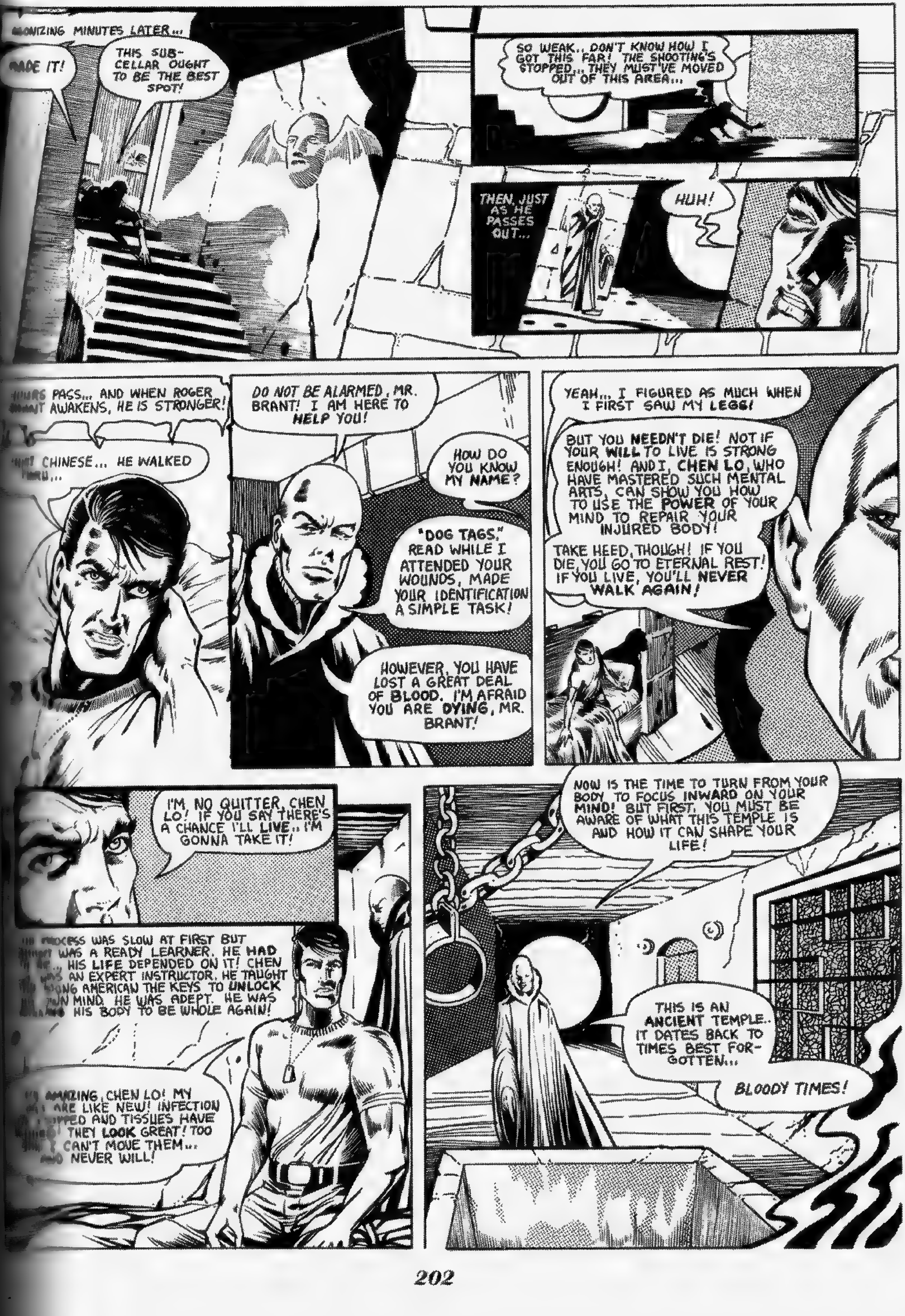
The final issue of BULLS EYE was also one of the best--the first story has BULLS EYE capturing an army deserter named Ruben Farrell. To do so, however, BULLS EYE engages in a fight with the traitor inside of a balloon. It ranks as one of Kirby's better fight scenes, which, of course, says quite a bit for it.

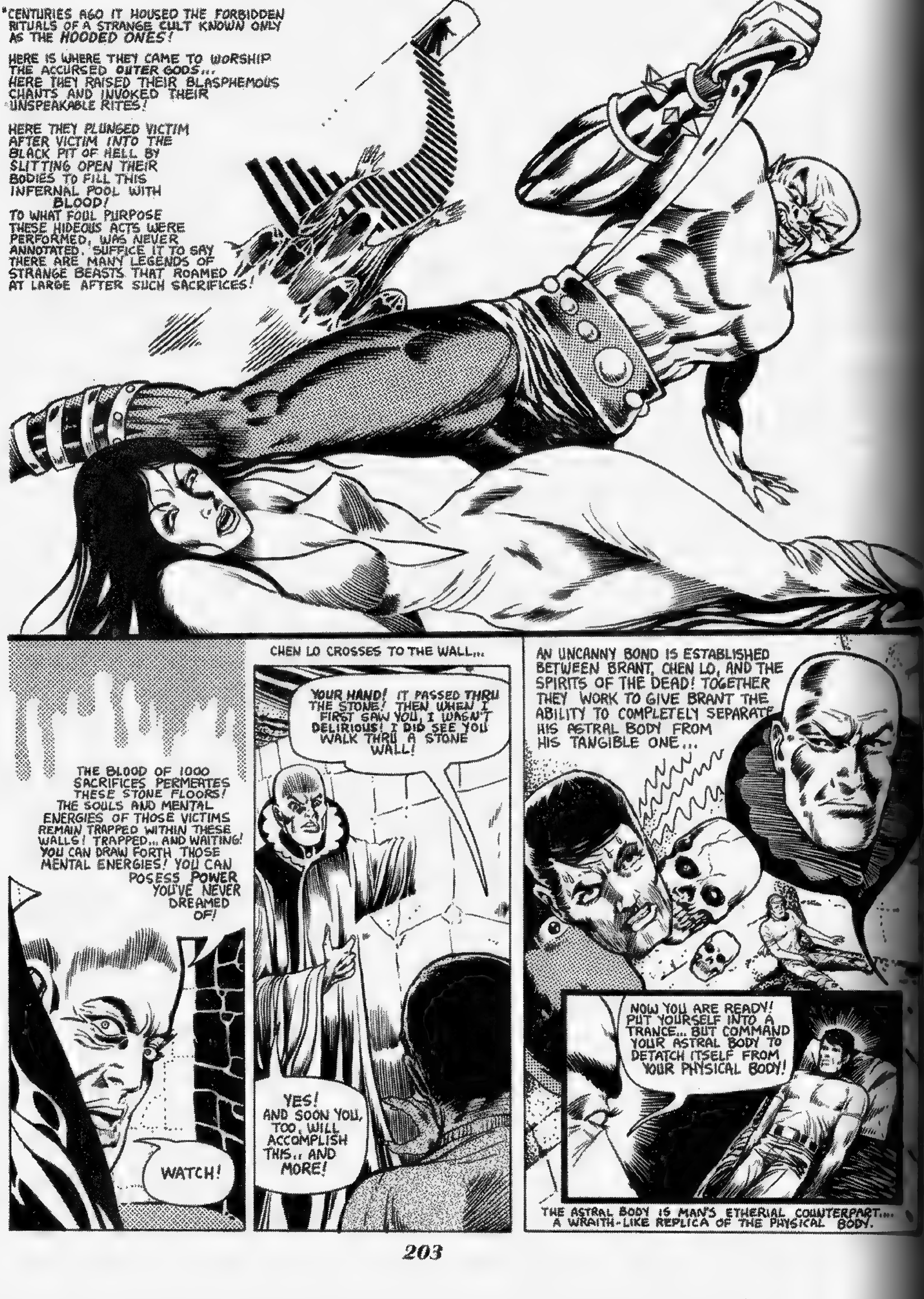
The final story, the "Stolen Bain God!" features a double page spread of Indians on the warpath. In this story BULLS EYE regains a stolen totem pole, averting a war between two Indian tribes. At the end of the story, the totem's theif is struck down with lightning. "Thus, in his travels, Panhandle Pete sees destiny work in many strange ways. But no sight is more strange and inspiring than watching him become the famous BULLS EYE and flash into action. Don't Miss the Next Exciting Issue!" This was the final statement in the BULLS EYE story. The Next Issue Never Came! All that remained, to the reader, was the Sheriff Shorty story, done this issue only by Simon and Kirby. And so, Panhandle Pete rode out of the pages of comic books, and BULLS EYE rode into the pages of comics history.

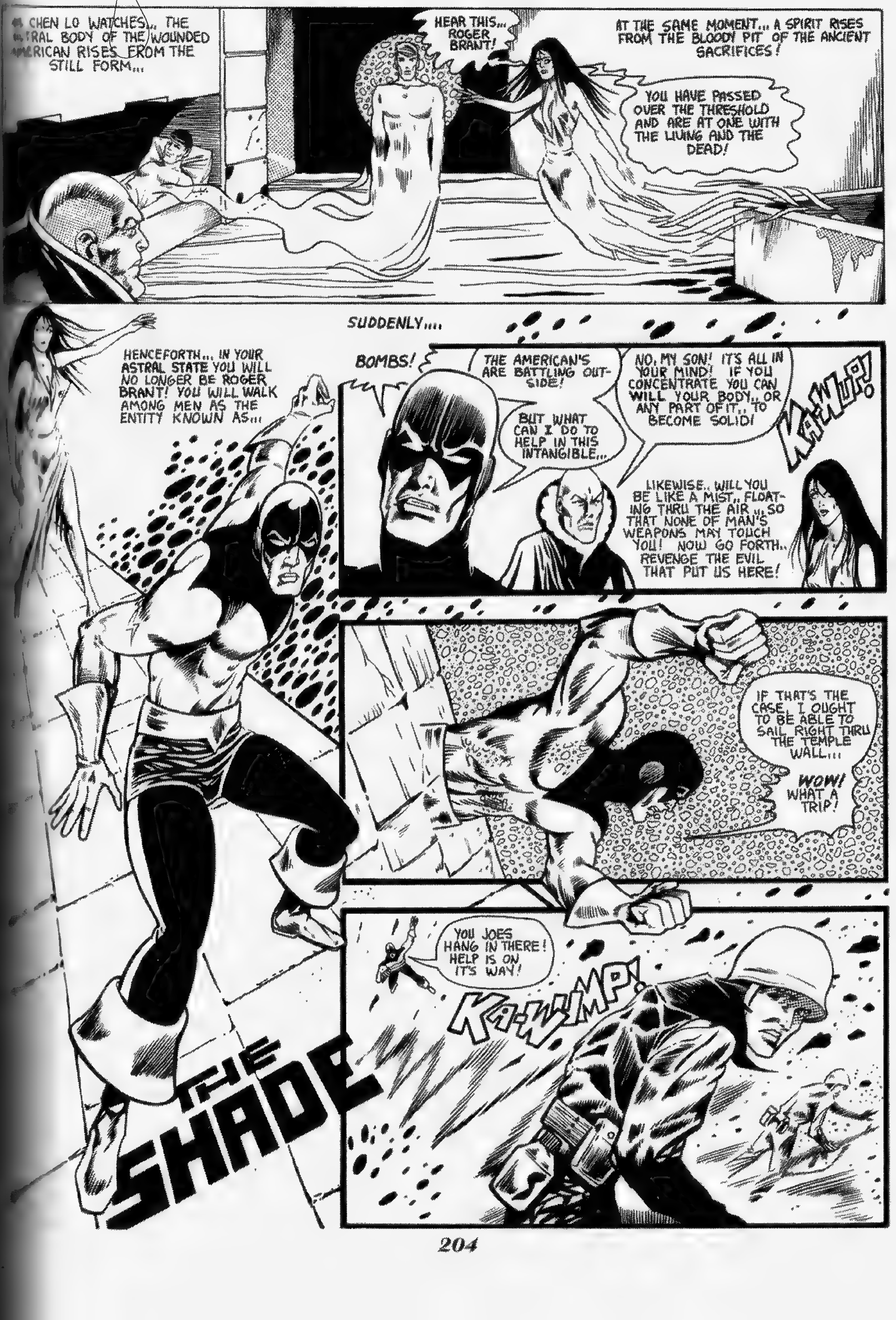
THE END

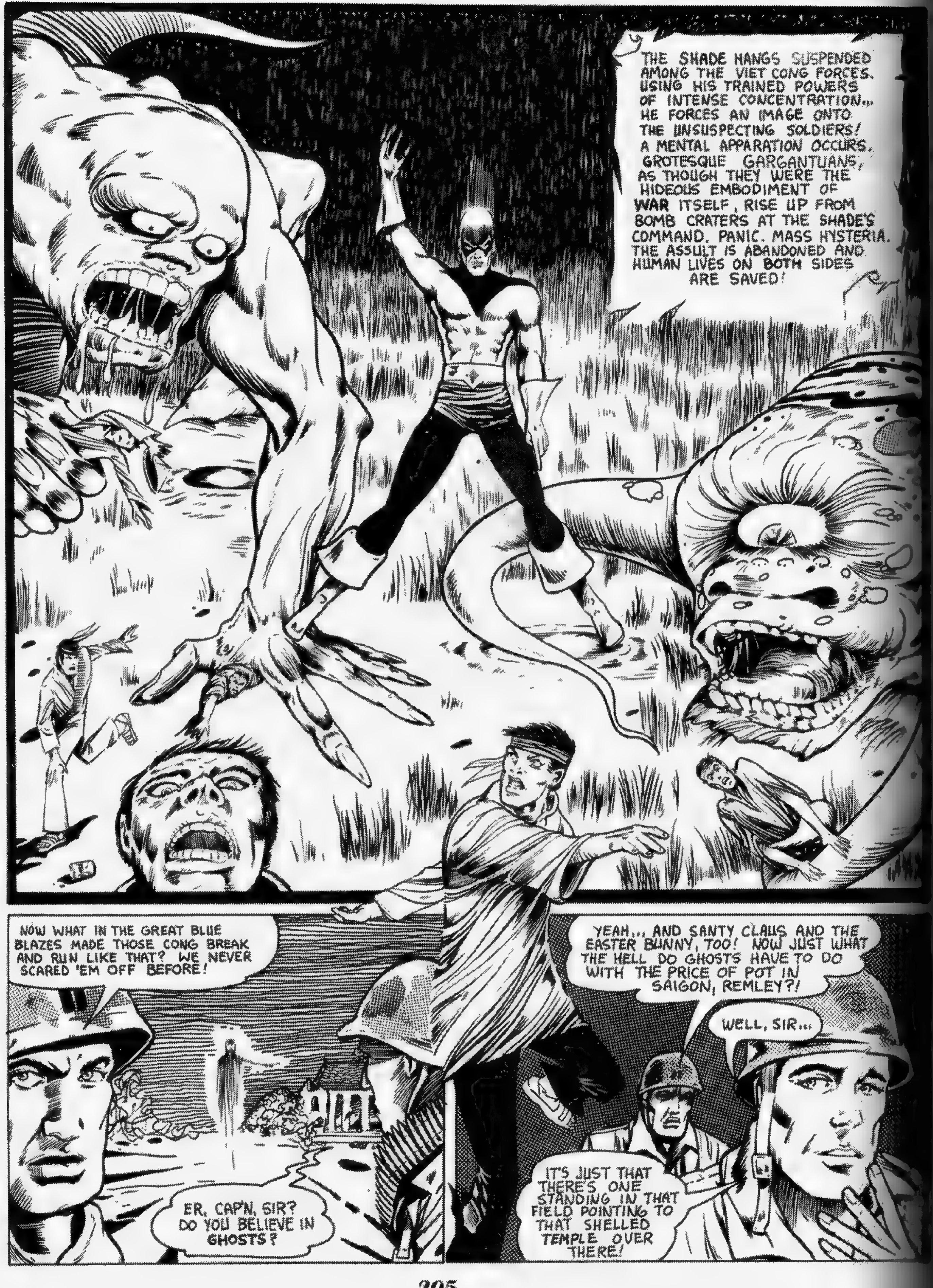


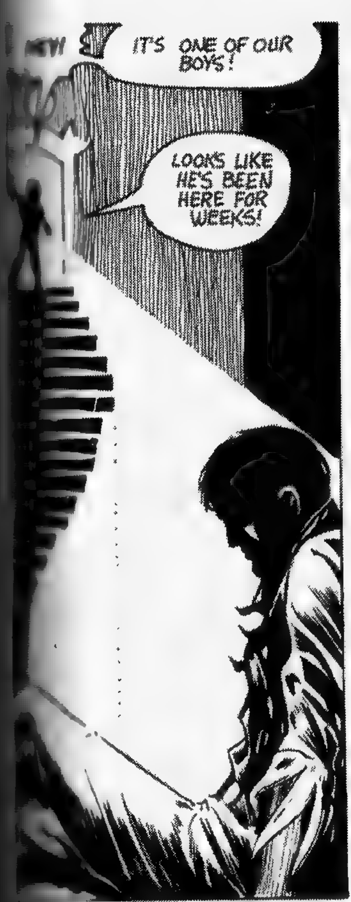

NIGHT OF
THE SHAD
VIET-NAM! WHERE MEN ONCE AGAIN RAISE THE UGLY HEAD OF WAR!
MEN CAME TO FIGHT, TO BE MAIMED, ..TO DIE! ONE MAN WHO CAME WAS TO HAVE HIS ENTIRE LIFE CHANGE SUDDENLY! IT STARTED WHEN SP4 ROGER BRANT STEPPED ON THAT BOOBYTRAP...!
KA-THUMP!
IT WASN'T THE PAIN THAT MADE HIM CRY OUT... IN FACT, HE WAS NUMB. BUT WHEN HE LOOKED DOWN AND SAW THOSE BLOODY HULKS THAT HAD ONCE BEEN HIS LEGS...
EEAAHHAWW
THE SCREAMING HELPED.. BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO PLAY SOLDIER AGAIN!
CUT OFF!
..NEVER CATCH UP TO MY UNIT NOW!
THAT TEMPLE.. MAYBE I CAN CRAWL TO IT FOR COVER!
BLACK
© 1970 GALAXY INTERNATIONAL PICTURES


AGONIZING MINUTES LATER...
MADE IT!
THIS SUB-CELLAR OUGHT TO BE THE BEST SPOT!
SO WEAK.. DON'T KNOW HOW I GOT THIS FAR! THE SHOOTING'S STOPPED.. THEY MUST'VE MOVED OUT OF THIS AREA...
THEN, JUST AS HE PASSES OUT...
HUH!
HOURS PASS... AND WHEN ROGER BRANT AWAKENS, HE IS STRONGER!
THAT CHINESE... HE WALKED THRU...
DO NOT BE ALARMED, MR. BRANT! I AM HERE TO HELP YOU!
HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
"DOG TAGS," READ WHILE I ATTENDED YOUR WOUNDS, MADE YOUR IDENTIFICATION A SIMPLE TASK!
HOWEVER, YOU HAVE LOST A GREAT DEAL OF BLOOD. I'M AFRAID YOU ARE DYING, MR. BRANT!
YEAH... I FIGURED AS MUCH WHEN I FIRST SAW MY LEGS!
BUT YOU NEEDN'T DIE! NOT IF YOUR WILL TO LIVE IS STRONG ENOUGH! AND I, CHEN LO, WHO HAVE MASTERED SUCH MENTAL ARTS, CAN SHOW YOU HOW TO USE THE POWER OF YOUR MIND TO REPAIR YOUR INJURED BODY!
TAKE HEED, THOUGH! IF YOU DIE, YOU GO TO ETERNAL REST! IF YOU LIVE, YOU'LL NEVER WALK AGAIN!
I'M NO QUITTER, CHEN LO! IF YOU SAY THERE'S A CHANCE I'LL LIVE.. I'M GONNA TAKE IT!
THE PROCESS WAS SLOW AT FIRST BUT BRANT WAS A READY LEARNER. HE HAD TO BE.. HIS LIFE DEPENDED ON IT! CHEN WAS AN EXPERT INSTRUCTOR. HE TAUGHT THE YOUNG AMERICAN THE KEYS TO UNLOCK HIS OWN MIND. HE WAS ADEPT. HE WAS WILLING HIS BODY TO BE WHOLE AGAIN!
IT'S AMAZING, CHEN LO! MY LEGS ARE LIKE NEW! INFECTION STOPPED AND TISSUES HAVE HEALED! THEY LOOK GREAT! TOO BAD I CAN'T MOVE THEM... AND NEVER WILL!
NOW IS THE TIME TO TURN FROM YOUR BODY TO FOCUS INWARD ON YOUR MIND! BUT FIRST, YOU MUST BE AWARE OF WHAT THIS TEMPLE IS AND HOW IT CAN SHAPE YOUR LIFE!
THIS IS AN ANCIENT TEMPLE.. IT DATES BACK TO TIMES BEST FORGOTTEN...
BLOODY TIMES!

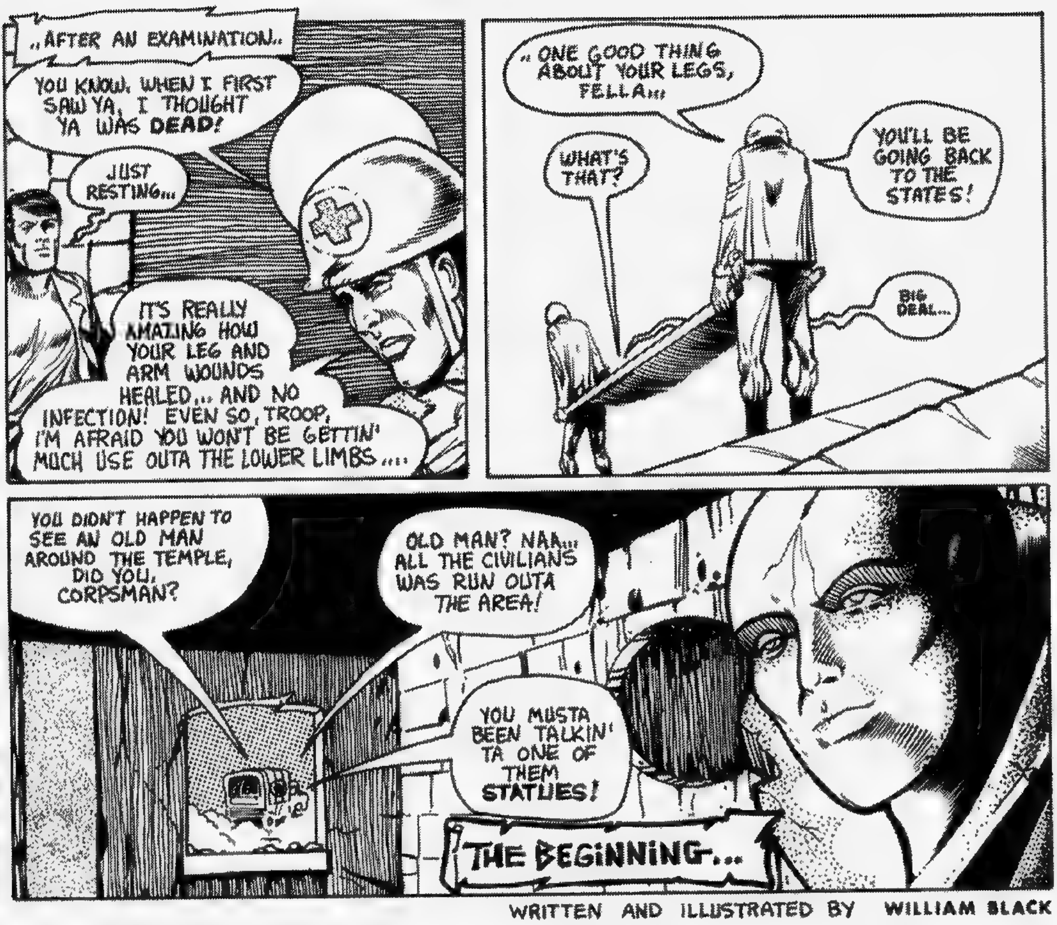

"CENTURIES AGO IT HOUSED THE FORBIDDEN RITUALS OF A STRANGE CULT KNOWN ONLY AS THE HOODED ONES!
HERE IS WHERE THEY CAME TO WORSHIP THE ACCURSED OUTER GODS... HERE THEY RAISED THEIR BLASPHEMOUS CHANTS AND INVOKED THEIR UNSPEAKABLE RITES!
HERE THEY PLUNGED VICTIM AFTER VICTIM INTO THE BLACK PIT OF HELL BY SLITTING OPEN THEIR BODIES TO FILL THIS INFERNAL POOL WITH BLOOD!
TO WHAT FOUL PURPOSE THESE HIDEOUS ACTS WERE PERFORMED, WAS NEVER ANNOTATED. SUFFICE IT TO SAY THERE ARE MANY LEGENDS OF STRANGE BEASTS THAT ROAMED AT LARGE AFTER SUCH SACRIFICES!
THE BLOOD OF 1000 SACRIFICES PERMEATES THESE STONE FLOORS! THE SOULS AND MENTAL ENERGIES OF THOSE VICTIMS REMAIN TRAPPED WITHIN THESE WALLS! TRAPPED... AND WAITING! YOU CAN DRAW FORTH THOSE MENTAL ENERGIES! YOU CAN POSESS POWER YOU'VE NEVER DREAMED OF!
WATCH!
CHEN LO CROSSES TO THE WALL...
YOUR HAND! IT PASSED THRU THE STONE! THEN WHEN I FIRST SAW YOU, I WASN'T DELIRIOUS! I DID SEE YOU WALK THRU A STONE WALL!
YES! AND SOON YOU, TOO, WILL ACCOMPLISH THIS.. AND MORE!
AN UNCANNY BOND IS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN BRANT, CHEN LO, AND THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD! TOGETHER THEY WORK TO GIVE BRANT THE ABILITY TO COMPLETELY SEPARATE HIS ASTRAL BODY FROM HIS TANGIBLE ONE...
NOW YOU ARE READY! PUT YOURSELF INTO A TRANCE... BUT COMMAND YOUR ASTRAL BODY TO DETATCH ITSELF FROM YOUR PHYSICAL BODY!
THE ASTRAL BODY IS MAN'S ETHERIAL COUNTERPART... A WRAITH-LIKE REPLICA OF THE PHYSICAL BODY.


AS CHEN LO WATCHES... THE ASTRAL BODY OF THE WOUNDED AMERICAN RISES FROM THE STILL FORM...
HEAR THIS... ROGER BRANT!
AT THE SAME MOMENT... A SPIRIT RISES FROM THE BLOODY PIT OF THE ANCIENT SACRIFICES!
YOU HAVE PASSED OVER THE THRESHOLD AND ARE AT ONE WITH THE LIVING AND THE DEAD!
HENCEFORTH... IN YOUR ASTRAL STATE YOU WILL NO LONGER BE ROGER BRANT! YOU WILL WALK AMONG MEN AS THE ENTITY KNOWN AS...
THE SHADE
SUDDENLY....
BOMBS!
THE AMERICAN'S ARE BATTLING OUTSIDE!
BUT WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP IN THIS INTANGIBLE...
NO, MY SON! IT'S ALL IN YOUR MIND! IF YOU CONCENTRATE YOU CAN WILL YOUR BODY.. OR ANY PART OF IT.. TO BECOME SOLID!
KA-WUP!
LIKEWISE.. WILL YOU BE LIKE A MIST.. FLOATING THRU THE AIR... SO THAT NONE OF MAN'S WEAPONS MAY TOUCH YOU! NOW GO FORTH.. REVENGE THE EVIL THAT PUT US HERE!
IF THAT'S THE CASE, I OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO SAIL RIGHT THRU THE TEMPLE WALL...
WOW! WHAT A TRIP!
YOU JOES HANG IN THERE! HELP IS ON IT'S WAY!
KA-WIMP!

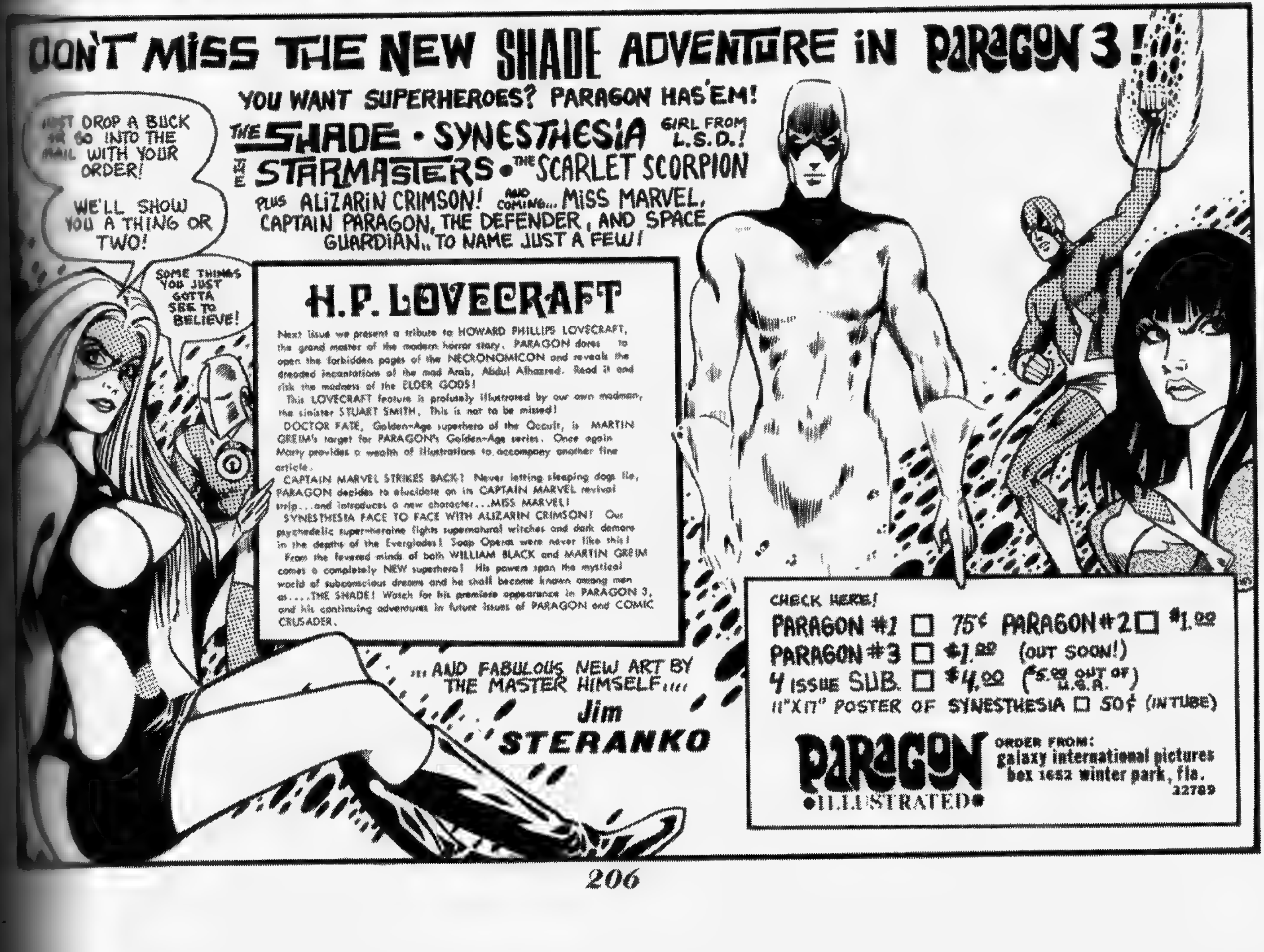

THE SHADE HANGS SUSPENDED AMONG THE VIET CONG FORCES. USING HIS TRAINED POWERS OF INTENSE CONCENTRATION... HE FORCES AN IMAGE ONTO THE UNSUSPECTING SOLDIERS! A MENTAL APPARATION OCCURS. GROTESQUE GARGANTUANS, AS THOUGH THEY WERE THE HIDEOUS EMBODIMENT OF WAR ITSELF, RISE UP FROM BOMB CRATERS AT THE SHADE'S COMMAND. PANIC. MASS HYSTERIA. THE ASSULT IS ABANDONED AND HUMAN LIVES ON BOTH SIDES ARE SAVED!
NOW WHAT IN THE GREAT BLUE BLAZES MADE THOSE CONG BREAK AND RUN LIKE THAT? WE NEVER SCARED 'EM OFF BEFORE!
ER, CAP'N, SIR? DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?
YEAH,.. AND SANTY CLAUS AND THE EASTER BUNNY, TOO! NOW JUST WHAT THE HELL DO GHOSTS HAVE TO DO WITH THE PRICE OF POT IN SAIGON, REMLEY?!
WELL, SIR...
IT'S JUST THAT THERE'S ONE STANDING IN THAT FIELD POINTING TO THAT SHELLED TEMPLE OVER THERE!


IT'S ONE OF OUR BOYS!
LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEEN HERE FOR WEEKS!

ED BY MARTIN GREIM


..AFTER AN EXAMINATION..
YOU KNOW, WHEN I FIRST SAW YA, I THOUGHT YA WAS DEAD!
JUST RESTING...
IT'S REALLY AMAZING HOW YOUR LEG AND ARM WOUNDS HEALED... AND NO INFECTION! EVEN SO, TROOP, I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T BE GETTIN' MUCH USE OUTA THE LOWER LIMBS....
"ONE GOOD THING ABOUT YOUR LEGS, FELLA...
WHAT'S THAT?
YOU'LL BE GOING BACK TO THE STATES!
BIG DEAL...
YOU DIDN'T HAPPEN TO SEE AN OLD MAN AROUND THE TEMPLE, DID YOU, CORPSMAN?
OLD MAN? NAA... ALL THE CIVILIANS WAS RUN OUTA THE AREA!
YOU MUSTA BEEN TALKIN' TA ONE OF THEM STATUES!
THE BEGINNING...

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM BLACK


DON'T MISS THE NEW SHADE ADVENTURE IN PARAGON 3!
YOU WANT SUPERHEROES? PARAGON HAS'EM!
THE SHADE • SYNESTHESIA GIRL FROM L.S.D.!
THE STARMASTERS • THE SCARLET SCORPION
PLUS ALIZARIN CRIMSON! AND COMING... MISS MARVEL, CAPTAIN PARAGON, THE DEFENDER, AND SPACE GUARDIAN.. TO NAME JUST A FEW!
JUST DROP A BUCK OR SO INTO THE MAIL WITH YOUR ORDER!
WE'LL SHOW YOU A THING OR TWO!
SOME THINGS YOU JUST GOTTA SEE TO BELIEVE!
...AND FABULOUS NEW ART BY THE MASTER HIMSELF....
Jim STERANKO

H.P. LOVECRAFT

Next issue we present a tribute to HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT, the grand master of the modern horror story. PARAGON dares to open the forbidden pages of the NECRONOMICON and reveals the dreaded incantations of the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred. Read it and risk the madness of the ELDER GODS!

This LOVECRAFT feature is profusely illustrated by our own madman, the sinister STUART SMITH. This is not to be missed!

DOCTOR FATE, Golden-Age superhero of the Occult, is MARTIN GREIM's target for PARAGON's Golden-Age series. Once again Marty provides a wealth of illustrations to accompany another fine article.

CAPTAIN MARVEL STRIKES BACK? Never letting sleeping dogs lie, PARAGON decides to elucidate on its CAPTAIN MARVEL revival strip...and introduces a new character...MISS MARVEL!

SYNESTHESIA FACE TO FACE WITH ALIZARIN CRIMSON! Our psychedelic super-heroine fights supernatural witches and dark demons in the depths of the Everglades! Soap Operas were never like this!

From the fevered minds of both WILLIAM BLACK and MARTIN GREIM comes a completely NEW superhero! His powers span the mystical world of subconscious dreams and he shall become known among men as.....THE SHADE! Watch for his premiere appearance in PARAGON 3, and his continuing adventures in future issues of PARAGON and COMIC CRUSADER.

CHECK HERE!

PARAGON #1 ☐ 75¢ PARAGON #2 ☐ $1.00
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11"X17" POSTER OF SYNESTHESIA ☐ 50¢ (IN TUBE)

PARAGON
•ILLUSTRATED•

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32789

COMIC CHATTER

First item of business, this issue, is from Jim Steranko.

NOTE FROM STERANKO:

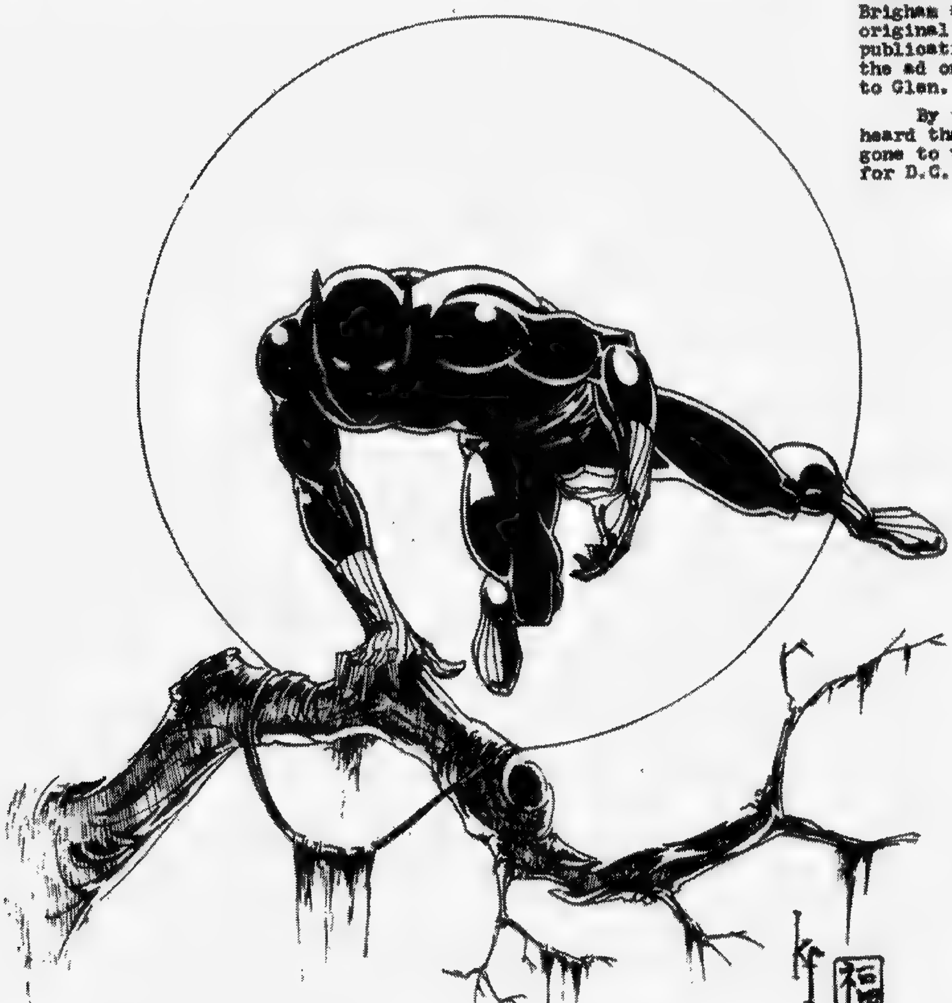
To all those who purchased **THE HISTORY OF COMICS** and have wondered where it is, my apologies! I've expanded the original 30,000 word manuscript to 150,000 words and that's a hell of a lot of writing. I've added this and a great deal more graphic material at my own expense. All I ask is your indulgence and patience until the book comes out. I guarantee it will be worth the wait. Do not send cards inquiring if your order was received. I've got them all and the first ones in will be the first to go out. After you've read the book, let me know your reaction. Until then, tell all your friends to hold tight.

STERANKO

Next a word from Dan Adkins:
The article on me, in your last issue, was fine. A few points were misleading, as always happens, but on the whole honest. I helped pencil the Iron Maiden story in Thunder Agents, not penciled it, period. I penciled backgrounds on Fantastic Voyage, not the whole thing. Maybe it really isn't all that important, but the article seemed to take from Wally Wood and give to me. He was what made the work good! Thanks very much again, for "Crusader".

IMPORTANT MESSAGE from Gary Groth:

For those of you who have either seen, in the RB&CC, or have received a circular on the 1970 Metro Comic Art Convention, I would like to make the following correction. Because of his tremendous work load, Jim Steranko has had to cancel his plans to come to this con. So regretfully, his name must be removed from the lists of pros attending. The Metro Con will be held Aug. 22nd & 23rd in Virginia. For information, write to: MICHAEL CATRON, 5909 Fisher Rd. (Apt. 103) Oxon Hill, Md. 20031.



© Marvel Comics Group....1970

The Comic Crusader - Champion Special has been delayed, but is still in the works.

You fans should be interested in a publication for the collecting of original artwork. It's called....."Forgetit". This is a ditto adzine that offers you prices, from various fans and dealers, on original pro artwork. It's free to anyone mailing a self-addressed envelope to: GLEN D. JOHNSON, 160 N. 6th E. st. Brigham City, Utah. 84302. If you have original art for sale, ad space in this publication is also free. Just type up the ad on a ditto master and mail it off to Glen.

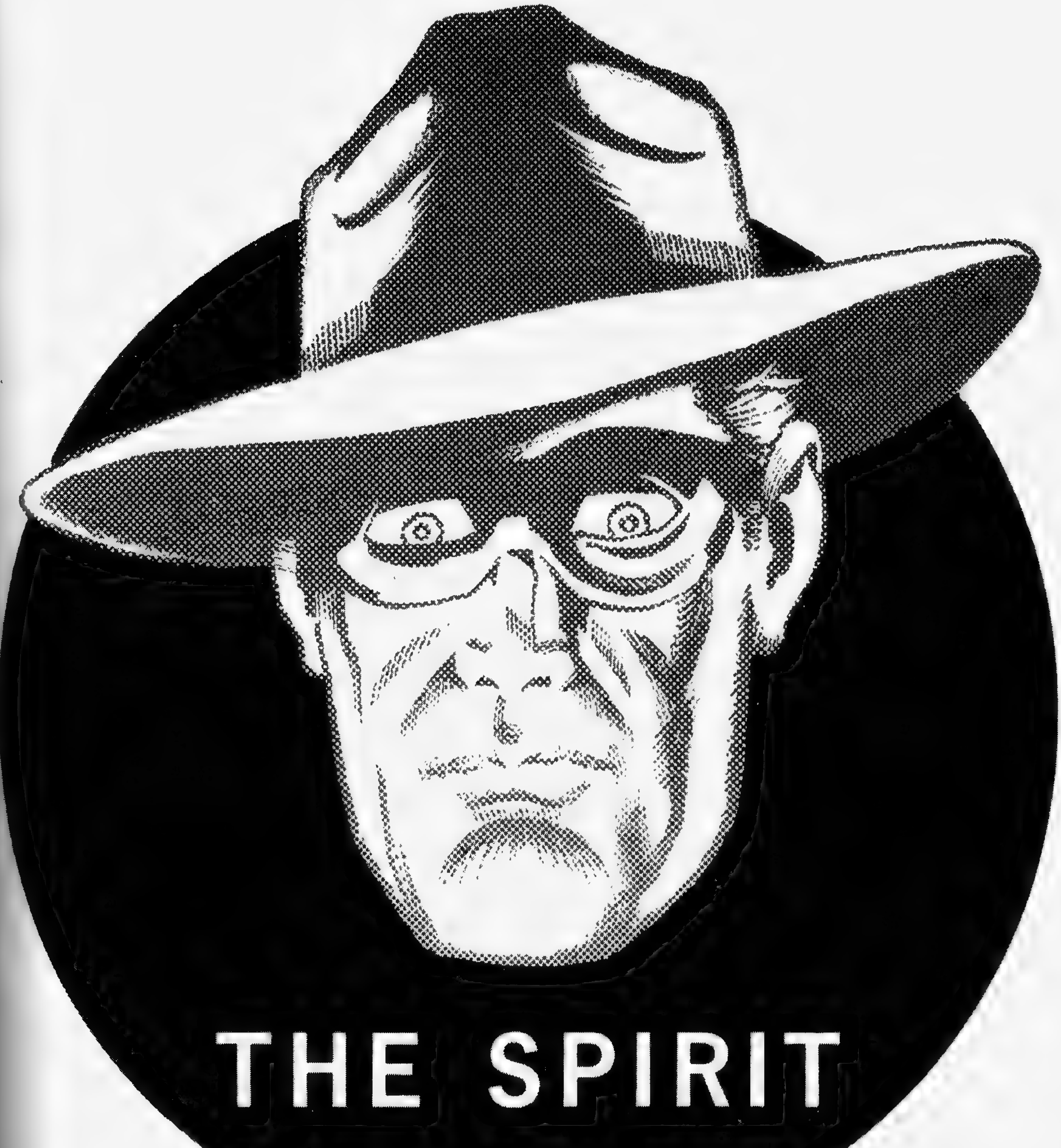
By this time, most of you fans have heard that Jack Kirby has left Marvel and gone to work as artist, editor, and writer for D.C. He'll be in charge of 3 new books. I'm told Neal Adams will be doing some work on Thor and that John Romita will be doing the Fantastic Four. Gil Kane will be doing Spiderman and Herb Trimpe, the Silver Surfer. I've heard too, that the Surfer is being canceled.

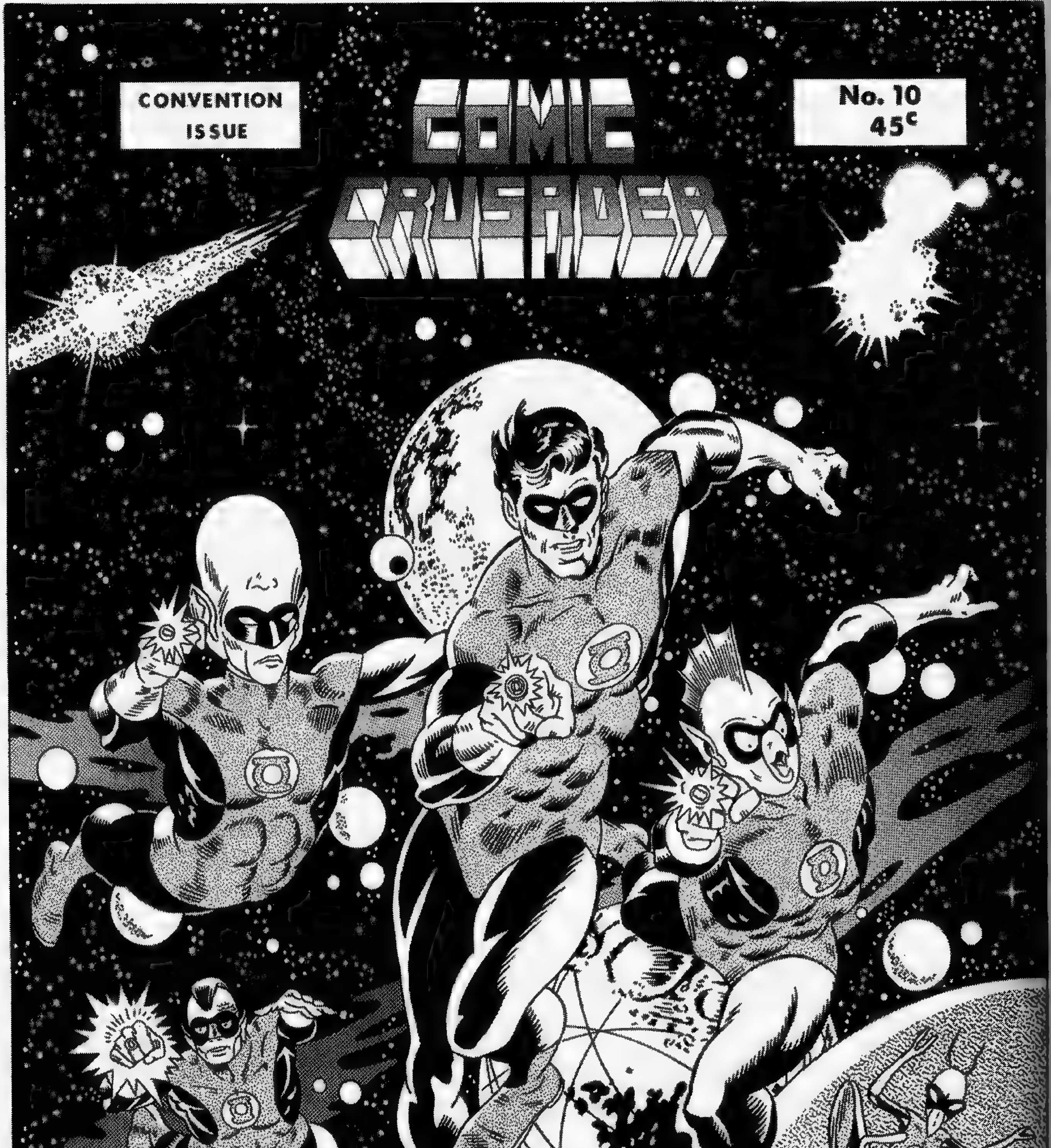
There's a bit of a story behind this issues super hero strip...The Shade.
For the longest time Bill Black wanted to do a super hero strip based on D.C.'s golden age hero The Sandman. Only this time he wanted to give him more of a supernatural power. Bill asked me if I would work on a story line and dream up a costume. I grooved on the idea and this issue's story is the result. The costume came about through the talent of Bob Cosgrove. Bob was over my place one Friday night while I was working on the story, and came up with the basic costume design that The Shade wears now. The final phase of The Shade was the creation of his name and the artistic rendering. This was all Bill Black's and the sensational result speaks for itself So there you have the creation of The Shade. You'll be seeing more of him.

How'd you like John Fantucchio's first pro venture in Vampirella #5? If you'ld like to see more of John's work, why not write Jim Warren and tell him so.

Well keep those cards and letters coming friends. It's you who decide "Crusader's" future. Best wishes - M.L.G.

Comic Crusader.......Vol. 1.....No. 9 35¢




CONVENTION ISSUE
COMIC CRUSADER
No. 10
45¢

WELCOME TO THE 1970 COMIC CONVENTION

Yes, it's Comic Crusader's convention issue! No, it's not the issue advertised in issue #9. There are a number of reasons for this change, and they are as follows. First and foremost, just about all my readers love the "Crusader" convention issue. There are a lot of other zines covering the con this year; therefore if I had put out the issue advertised, by the time "Crusader's" Convention Issue came out, it would be "old news!"

My second reason, for the switch, is because the Flash Gordon article I'd planned for issue #10 has gotten out of hand. It's now going to be a complete Flash Gordon book, in the next issue of "Crusader". Not only are Mike Royer and I doing some art and articles, but Al Williamson has come through with a beautiful Flash Gordon cover and some interior art. I'm in Al's debt, for doing this especially for Comic Crusader. Another pro, named Joe Sinnott, is a Flash Gordon fan and he's promised to do something for this issue too. Then Bill Black and I have a little something going, that should turn you on. So don't miss this one gang. I hope to make this issue the most fantastic Flash Gordon piece ever to hit fandom. If it turns out the way I hope it will, it should be quite a collector's item.

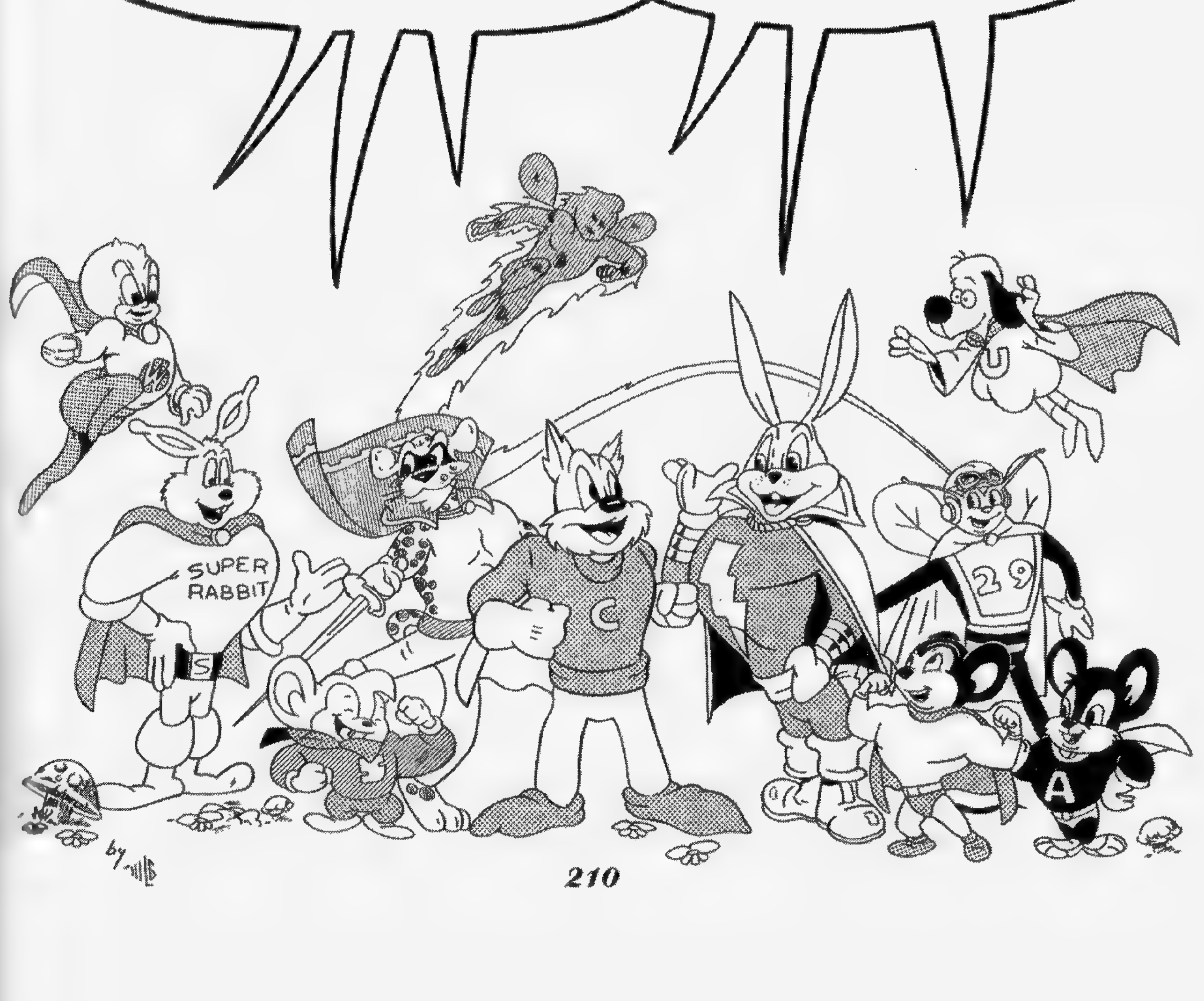
There are a lot of changes and new types of issues in store for you readers. Some of the changes, you can see in this issue. The Defender will be in issue #12 and will be a complete story, finishing off the one started in issue #8.

Now my next piece of business concerns the price of Comic Crusader. As many of you know, I raised the price of this zine to 45¢, last issue. This price applies for this issue only! Starting with issue #11, the price will be 50¢. Now before you start boiling oil to drop me in, hear me out! I've added more pages to "Crusader" and I'm trying for a little more professional format, without losing the fan made flavor. I hope the finished product will be a zine you'll want to keep for years. The increase to 50¢ will be the final increase. I believe I can give you readers a zine with top quality material, covering the comic media, for a price more in line with your pocket book. Sure, I could go back to the 35¢ format, but if you dig well written and well drawn material, relating to your hobby of comic collecting, the 50¢ product should be the answer! You can buy zines of pro quality for $1.00 or $5.00, but these often relate to one topic or they are completely art oriented. Not that this is bad, but I'm going to give you a zine of the same quality, that relates to the whole comic media and for less money! So bear with me. If you don't dig the 50¢ "Crusader" after issue #13, we'll go back to the smaller 35¢ issue.

Starting with issue #11, you can subscribe for 2 issues. Issue's 11 and 12 for $1.00. I'm only taking two issue subscriptions, so please don't subscribe beyond issue #12.

This will most likely be my last convention issue. Even though "Crusader" does it better, there are so many zines doing Con reports now, that much of what I'd report would be repetitive. I'll still report on convention highlights, but unless something drastic changes my mind, this will be the last Con issue. I do hope you enjoy this one, though! - MLG.

This issue's cover © National Per. Pub. 1970



CONversation

by: Cosgrove & Greim

Greetings readers! Bob and I hope you enjoy reading this issue about the New York and Metro Con's. Bob, why don't you describe your view of the New York Con, so the readers will have a general idea of the atmosphere at a comic convention.

Alright, Marty. I hope this will give the readers some insight into what went on in the background at the New York Comic Art Convention of 1970.

Con's are fun affairs, but very tiring--stay up 'till four in the morning, rapping with friends, visiting with pros, attending parties, rushing out to eat, trying to get to panels on time, etc. That's how it is for ordinary mortals, at least! For gods, madmen, and fanzine editors, it's even more confusing; especially if you're trying to snap photographs, tape-record panels, and perform all the usual con activities simultaneously.

Marty and Ellie had gone to New York ahead of me, so I was alone on the four hour train trip down to the con. I checked in at the Statler-Hilton and upon arriving at my room, found it a madhouse of drawings and suitcases. It was apparent that my roomie, Bill Black, had arrived ahead of me. Sure enough, he soon appeared, accompanied by Stu Smith, Agonizin' Al Bradford, and the Romeo and Juliet of fandom, Martin and Eleanor Greim.

From there on in, things got exciting. Al, Bill, and I spent most of our sack time talking about art and new directions for the comic media; and during the days ahead, we rushed madly around, along with MLG and Ellie, going to lunch, perusing the dealer's room and rapping with the TISOS crew. Marty chatted with Al Williamson and renewed his happy acquaintance with guest of honor, Bill Everett. On the last day of the Con, I ran into Joe Sinnott, who had been looking for us for most of the Con. (Us, and a million other people). Marty, the rest of the gang and I spent and enjoyable half hour with Joe and his son Mark.

Like last year, Marty asked that his drawings NOT be included in the amateur art contest, even though he is technically an amateur, but only be placed on display. When Jim Steranko and Mike Royer joined us in MLG's room, I asked Jim, as we were discussing his History of Comics, if he was judging the next day's art contest, which included such fine artist as Dave Cockrum. When Jim said that he was, I, having a painting in the contest, asked Jim if he could be bought. He replied in the affirmative, but was out of my price range. The next day, Jim and the several other pros judging the contest overruled both MLG and Seuling and declared Marty the winner, among the 20 finalists actually entered. "That medal is just like the Blue Max," Steranko later remarked. And I'm not a bit jealous, either, even though I did show up at MLG's abode the following week, wearing every medal I could find from an actual Blue Max to a "I Gave At The Office" badge. You laugh now, Steranko, but wait 'till you read the review I helped give History of Comics this issue!

For those of you who are wondering what clinched it for MLG as art contest winner; it was a painting of the super animals, pictured at the bottom of the opposite page, saying "WELCOME TO THE 1970 COMIC CONVENTION!"

See you at next years con,

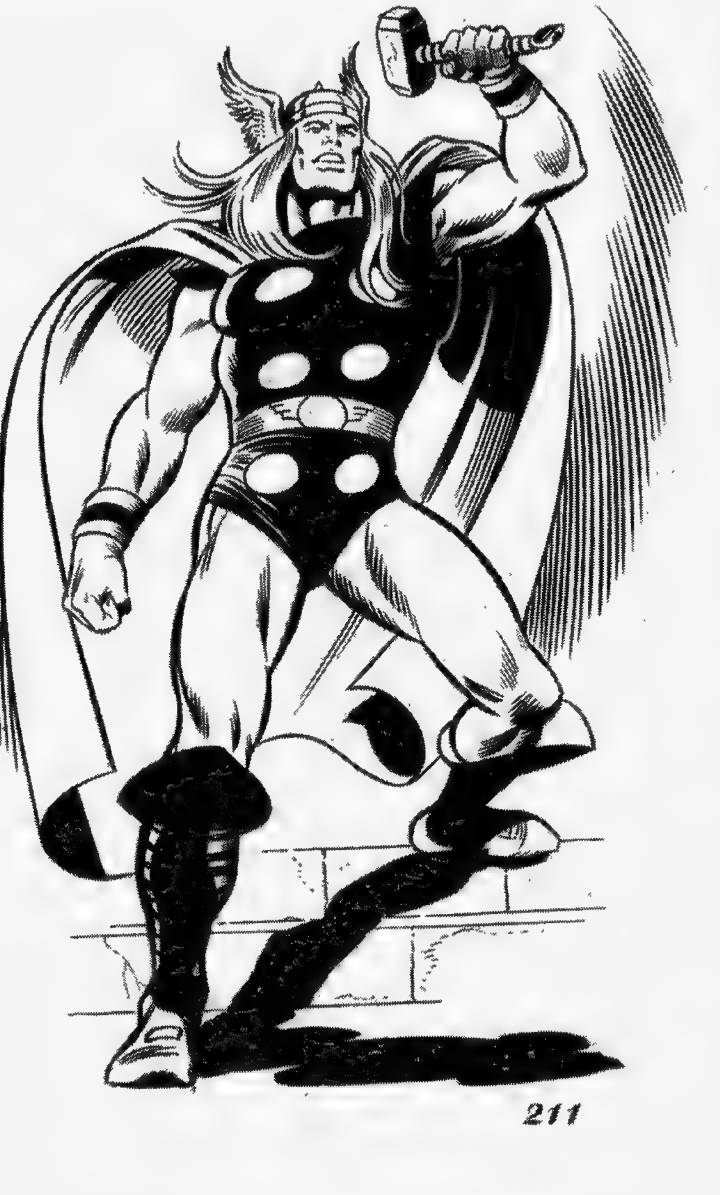
Bob Cosgrove -

Thank you, Bob. I'd also like to thank Phil Seuling, for without him there wouldn't have been a New York Con to write a report about. Phil, you're fantastic!

See you at the con,

Martin L. Greim -

(PHIL SEULING)



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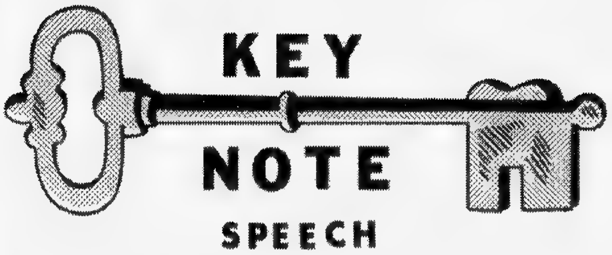
A SPECIAL VOTE OF THANKS TO JOHN BUSCEMA AND JOE SINNOTT, FOR THE BEAUTIFUL THOR DRAWING ON THIS PAGE.



KEY NOTE SPEECH

NEAL ADAMS

Written by: BOB COSGROVE

It was 12:00, or perhaps a little after, and the Sky Top room of the Statler Hilton was rapidly filling. It had been a long wait--not just the standing in line to recieve an identification badge, before being able to peruse the original art exhibit and plunder the dealers rooms--but in a larger sense, it had been a whole year since the fabulous 1969 comic art convention--and the fans were eager to swing into the 1970 version. Phil Seuling, architect and chief designer of the convention, began his welcoming speech. He was proud, but not arrogant. Proud of his convention, proud of the people who helped, proud of the con book, proud that this year, for the first time, a group of underpriviledged youth would be attending the con free--treated to free comics through the efforts of Dick Giordano, Stan Lee, and James Warren. He was also proud, he said, of the fans who came to the convention. A veteran of several science fiction cons, Seuling dismissed them as "putter-downer's" conventions. "I've never seen anyone here treated as anything except an equal in the [illegible] of the medium," Phil boasted, adding that one of the many news reporters covering last years convention had told him he had never seen a better behaved group of conventioneers.

Phil was appreciative--appreciative of the efforts of Jim Warren, Roy Thomas, Al Williamson, Gray Morrow, Jim Steranko, Bill Pearson, Chris Steinbrunner, and the beleagured girls at the registration table. And more. More than he could remember. More than we can remember, but still, everyone is grateful.

Phil fielded questions--he told one fan that he was happy to receive suggestions and ideas for panels, and suggested that they be mailed to him, so he wouldn't forget. Finally, one fan expressed dismay that he hadn't heard anything about the con until the very last minute. Phil smiled wryly.

"You know," he said, "I think G.B. LOVE, and his Rocket's Blast is one of the greatest things to ever happen to fandom. He held us together when there wasn't much else. BUT--G.B. is kind of funny in some ways--as far as he is concerned, this convention doesn't exist. You never see so much as a mention of it, unless it's a paid ad."

"G.B.," Phil continued, "is always saying SUPPORT FANDOM, by which he means, SUPPORT THE ROCKET'S BLAST. But when someone like myself, who has helped him out in the past, asks for a favor, the "Support Fandom" bit

isn't played quite so loudly, even though he prints articles claiming we should do a convention report for HIM. Now I'm not mad at G.B., but wouldn't it be interesting, if everyone who attended this con, sent Gordon a little note saying "Say, why didn't you publicize the New York Convention?" (*Note - The editor and staff of Comic Crusader whole-heartedly endorse Phil's suggestion. If G.B. is REALLY interested in fandom, and not just G.B., let him put his money where his mouth is and publicize the Conventions, which by virtue of their TV and Radio coverage, pull in more fans than the RBCC. The number of fans at the con, 5,000, is a full 3,000 larger than the circulation of the Rocket's Blast. You might point that out, when you write G.B. at this address:

G.B. LOVE
9875 SW 212 Street
Miami, Fla. 33157

As Phil finished, he introduced Dick Giordano, who simply stated that he had asked Phil for the privilege of introducing a man he very much admired. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "it is my honor to present my friend, NEAL ADAMS!" Simple, eloquent, it said more than a lengthly introduction. No one in the crowd really needed to be told who Neal Adams was. His work speaks for itself.

Thanking Dick, Adams, no longer wearing his goatee, and attired in a sportscoat with a pink shirt, stepped up to the microphone, and began the keynote speech.

"Anyone who has read the convention booklet that Phil prepared, especially the part where my fellow artists comment upon my personality, or lack of it, notice a great deal of contradiction. I will admit to a great deal of contradiction in my attitudes," Neal conceded, "but in one area at least, I will insist that I am consistent, and that area has to do with the subject of comic books. In that area I'm an all out fan. A fan not in the sense that most of you in this room consider yourselves fans, although many of my reasons are the same as yours. My criterion for being an enthusisastic fan of comics is only in a small way based on the fact that I like to read them." "And," he affirmed, "I DO like to read them."

"My main reason for likeing comics", he explained, "is that I believe in their intrinsic value, their potential, and their ability to do good."

"You see," Neal said, expanding his point, "I believe that comics are art. I think of comics as America's second art form. The first American art form being jazz. Just as jazz is a pure American art form, so are comics. Just like jazz, we did it first in America. We did it more completely. We did it best. We still do." Neal paused, and then continued his analogy. "In my mind, jazz and comics are analogous in many ways. Jazz was not appreciated by other music forms, just as comic art is not appreciated by other art forms. Jazz originally appealed as a gut reaction, a direct and pure form; comics are direct, honest, and pure. Jazz can be simple or sophisticated, and still remain jazz; comics can be simple or sophisticated, as sophisticated as you want them. As time went by, jazz began to affect other music forms, and now there is hardly any type of music that does not draw upon the aspects of jazz --rock and roll, folk song, musical comedy--it's become part of our culture, one of the best parts. Comic books are following the same course. They have already affected our culture by themselves. Generations of people have grown up with a comic book as part of their background. Movie and TV directors have drawn upon comics for many of their visual effects. Educators are beginning to discover the possibility of teaching thru our art form; photo-essays and classier magazines are taking on a comic format look.

What does this all mean? I think it means that comic books are coming of age. Comics began--they got better and better--they became literature with EC. They possibly overstepped their bounds, and they got stepped on. So crushing and devastating was the blow guided by the iron truncheon of Dr. Frederick Wertham," said Neal, as a hiss arose from the audience, "and approved of," Neal came back, "by a concerned society which had a lot to be concerned about, that the comics industry whimpered and cringed its way into a small dark corner called the Comics Code--a self induced censorship organization."

"Comic books," Neal lamented, "continued to pour out, but they lacked GUTS. They lacked a lot of things--reality, blood, cuss words, bullet holes, punctures in bodies, spit, drool, and--heaven protect us, sex."

While the audience chuckled, Neal paused, and then plunged in again, resuming his hard-hitting speech. "And still, with the strictest code ever imposed on any entertainment media, stricter than the television code, stricter than the radio code, stricter than the ethics of the syndicated strips,

sinister, my friends, than the ethics of little golden books! Children's books do not have a strict a code of ethics as comic books. That's true. Yet, under this code, comic books were still fun to read, and as time went by, they got better, and better, and better, until today, you have a situation where, still under the code, the art in comic books is second to none. The writing is increasingly literate and well done; increasingly, the field is attracting and holding the best of artists and writers of our day. We're in a moment of transition, and the question is, where do we go from here?

I have a few speculations I'm going to lay on you. In spite of the fact that comic books seem to be as popular with the kids as ever, they aren't selling well. Publishers are finally realizing it's because a candy store just can't afford to sell a product for just a few cents profit. Solution? The price of the product must go up. If the price goes up, the look of the product must change. More experiments, like Gil Kane's HIS NAME IS SAVAGE will have to be attempted." Again, the audience applauded. Neal glanced across the room, his arms resting lightly on the rostrum, and then he resumed speaking.

Magazines like PLAYBOY and EVERGREEN have shown that a more sophisticated type of comic material can be accepted by the public. Therefore, material outside the code will probably be tried. Educators are finally realizing that motivation is the key to education, and what could be more motivating to a third grader than reading his lessons in a comic book format? Imagine, for example, a history lesson illustrated by Gray Morrow and written by Denny O'Neil or Roy Thomas. This may seem far-out, but right now slide films on world history are being produced in a comic book format. I know, because I've done about 25 of them.

A young man, Mr. Byron Priess, who is in this audience, will be holding an auction later on to raise money for a program that features teaching directly through comics.

The final speculation I'd like to present to you is not a speculation at all--it's an accomplished fact! The creative people in this industry have felt for a long time that we need a voice; a voice to tell people that comics are literate, that they're not full of [illegible] stories, that thousands of and perhaps millions of kids learn to read better with comic books than our educational system is able to teach them without comic books." The crowd applauded wildly. They had waited years for this moment, lonely years, knowing the truth of what Adams was saying, knowing it in their hearts, whispering it at fan meetings and on the pages of their fanzines. Now, someone had said it; someone of stature who would say it again, before less receptive audiences. And better still--he was not alone.

Neal continued. "That perhaps their kids would be turned off READING about Archie Andrews and his friends than they are watching it on the boob tube. Well, we finally have a voice. The voice is an organization, and the organization is called ACBA (pronounced ACK-buh--B.C.) This association is our voice--our voice to the public, to the publisher, and to the fans. During the convention you'll probably hear a lot more about ACBA, and the things it hopes to do. One thing it's doing, is lending full support and approval to this convention, and the fans to whom we owe a debt of gratitude. Gratitude, no so much for the number of books that you purchase, but for the fact that in the past fifteen years, the only voice raised in defense of this industry when it has been attacked, was the voice of the fans. Well people, we join you--because all of us in this industry, writers, pencillers, inkers, letterers, production men, all of us--we're comic book fans too. And with that thought in mind, I'd like to wish you all a happy 1970 Comic Art Convention.

Scarcely had the applause faded, when Phil Seuling stepped up to the roster, holding plaque in hand. "I'd like to read the inscription," Phil announced, and promptly did so: "To Neal Adams--for the new perspectives and the dynamic vibrancy he has brought to the field of comic art." Once again the applause rang forth, and amidst it, there was Phil Seuling, announcing that Neal had asked for a question and answer session. Naturally, the audience was delighted, and Adams settled down to the business of fielding questions.

Adam' first interviewer asked which of the three companies the free-lancer worked for--National, Marvel, and Warren--Neal liked best. Adams neatly fielded the issue by replying, "Each comic book company works a different way. National hands you a script, and it's a finished story, and they don't like changes made, unless you really feel it's necessary. At Marvel, they give you a plot summary, you talk over the story with the writer, and then work out the details as you draw it. Later on, the writer fills in the dialogue. Working at Creepy is more in terms of trying to fit a terribly dynamic story into six pages. They're all different problems, and any artist whose working in the field today enjoys a challenge. They're just different. They're not better or worse, they're just different. Any comic book company, if it had all the best artists and all the best writers would be the best company, but everybody's so spread around you just can't call one the best--there's no way."

Why, asked the next fan, are comic book characters becoming more involved with contemporary problems, and why weren't they before? "I suspect--it's because the comic book industry was fat, satisfied. The comic book industry was making dough. Then Marvel became competitive with National. National became competitive with Marvel. Now, it seems like every six months one company is beating out the other. The latest gambit is good literature. It's a gambit I welcome, and one that should have been around long before.

Did Adams think word ballons helped covers? He didn't worry about them, felt it a matter of personal taste. He tries to concern himself with drawing a cover which tells what the story is all about.

Still another fan voiced his concern that Adams, in his speech, seemed to be agreeing that the pressures upon society (at the time of Wertham's attacks culminated in the "voluntary" formation of the Comics Code) were justified. "I didn't mean to, and I hope that I didn't give that impression," Neal replied. "The fact was, that there were those pressures on society, whether or not they were justified, they were there. If somebody has me trapped in a black, dark alley, and has a gun on me, it's not that I prefer it that way, that's the way things are. And if I have to hit him because of it, that doesn't necessarily mean I don't believe in non-violence. That means I just don't want to die.

As the crowd chuckled, Neal fielded still another question. "Do you see any need, commercial or otherwise, for the Comics Code Authority?" Adams' reply was, "Yeah. I see it as a group that we can tell parents of the younger children that within this classification of comic books, we are not presenting anything to their children

AL BRADFORD '70

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that they should find morally unjustified. My general attitude is that the comics code is out-dated, and ought to be changed in a great many areas. But, if we want to do things that don't have anything to do with the comics code, I think the world has come to the point where it will accept comic book format-type things, without having to do with the comics code. And if we make it so, kind of announce it, maybe through ACBA, maybe through the companies, that these particular books are not for children, because they're not under the comics code. Anybody can buy them. Just the way films are. Like everybody's talking about it. There's a lot of noise."

Last year when Gil Kane gave his Keynote Speech, he said that comic books are almost over the hill, that super heroes are used up--what do you think of that?

"I think he's generally right. But not completely. I mean, there are things you can do. I've had arguements with a lot of people in this business. They say, "This character is no good". My arguement is that, "No. This character is good. It's the way he's handled that counts." I think it would create a lot of interest, if super heroes did things that had to do with the world today. In other words, somebody who isn't really human viewing a human situation. Super Heroes, as they are presented, are just 'pase. We're just sick of 'em! I'm sick of 'em; you're sick of 'em. You could just throw up over 'em."

Gil Kane entered the picture, and Adams and his audience spoke of the silver-crested comic king for several minutes to come. One fan asked why Kane's innovateive "His Name is Savage" had failed commercially.

"It failed", Adams said, "because the distribution company, Able News, really doesn't do much of a job distributing. If it was handled by a good distributor, I think it would've sold very well."

Is it true that Gil Kane was sued by Lee Marvin for the cover on His Name is Savage?

"That's scuttlebutt. That's rumor. It doesn't mean anything. If Gil Kane tells you that he was sued--OK, but he didn't tell me that."

Adams' next interrogater wanted to know what the new format for comics would be. As he was offering possible alternatives, Adams interrupted him, insisting that "There isn't going to be any new format for comics". Warming to the subject he seemed most interested in talking about, Neal continued, "I think the NEW FORMAT for comics is going to be variety. It's going to be pantamine stories; there are going to be a lot of copy stories. National Comics is doing a couple Adam Strange stories, where it is practically all text with little illustrations following them; two on a page. Variety is the name of the game, from now on. You just won't know what to expect. It's generally going to be pretty interesting."

Adams' next comment was on whether or not comics were FINE ART.

Since I cringe when I hear the expression, "fine art", I wouldn't use that apallation on comic book art, because I think it's an insult. I think that in general, most fine art is well-decorated. There's very little fine art that I consider any good. Now, I come from the commercial art field. In this field, I'm considered pretty talented. I can handle just about any kind of job. I prefer to do comic book work. If I went into fine art, the pressures upon a fine artist is so ridiculous--! A gallery owner has to like your work, and he has to promote you, and he works out a deal with some review writer...
Now comic books is an art field. The same as jazz is. People who dig comics, really dig it. There's got to be something behind that. In my view, it's because it's a worthwhile medium."

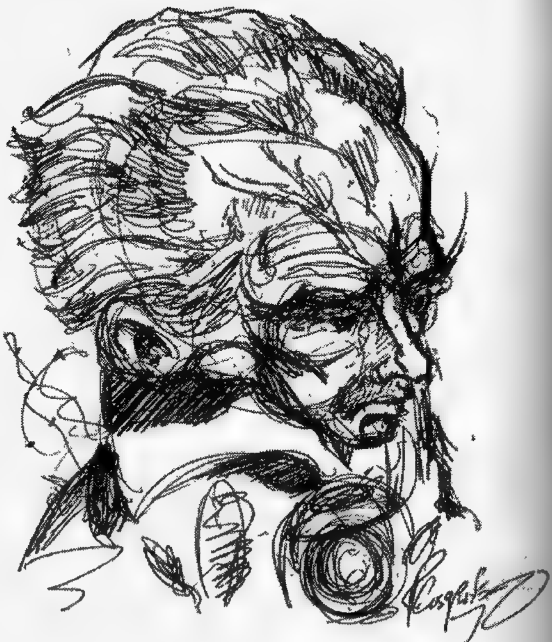
Adams responded to a question asking what value, if any, he found in underground comics.

"I don't think it's really worth it. A lot of guys messing around with a lot of different techniques and for the most part, it looks like gobbldygook. Now, you can go through an underground comic and find not a single good idea on a page, but if you DO find one, it's different; different from what you've been used to seeing. They're trailblazers--they're not terribly professional, some of the stuff is dull as hell, some of it is so sex-oriented that you just get tired of it, but it's just an idea thing.--"

What do you mean by ideas--story, art?

"Just ideas. Vaughn Bode--some people consider him an underground artist, although I don't, has developed a very simple, very direct style, and some people are beginning to make use of it. He's not trying to dazzle you with beautiful drawings. You know, sometimes I get awfully tired of trying to draw drawings so pretty and dazzling that people will go "WOW--Look at THAT!" and forget all about the little caption, and what the story is saying. It's just an idea thing, and it depends on you how much you get out of it. If you have any kind of brains at all, you can get something out of almost anything."

In response to a question asking if Gary Groth's somewhat silly campaign to revise the comics code would succeed, Adams opinioned it wouldn't, and then added--



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"Well, when we talk about areas in which the code needs revision, I would have to have a copy of the code here. It's shot through and through with dialogue that doesn't make sense, with attitudes that don't make sense. Like, "You can't write the word 'crime' on the cover". You can't write the word "crime" on the cover - that's ridiculous! That's STUPID!"

Adams talked a bit about the economics of comics, explaining that the returns on the 12¢ comic made it almost worthless, and affirming his belief in a flexible market. As evidence, he offered the Nostalgia Press books and the Gray Morrow portfolio, which was selling at the con for four dollars. "I don't feel 15¢ is fair to the people who are buying it--they're getting cheated because the artist isn't doing his best--he's not getting paid enough."

Do Archie Goodwin's use of preliminary drawings enhance the visual understanding of a script better?

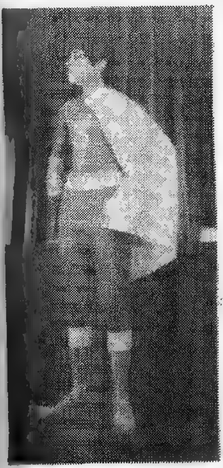
Adams answered--"Someone just asked me an in question. Archie Goodwin writes his script and on his script he does these little scratchy drawings. Very interesting. They help tell the story; they help the artist understand. Does it help the artist is what he asked. Yes it helps.

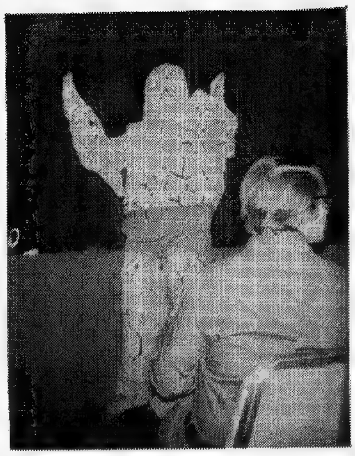
Byron Preiss asked if Adams thought a better quality paper and packaging would help comics, but Adams replied that he thought the current format was okay for the younger kids, and that the more "classy" look could be aimed at a more sophisticated audience.

The next question dealt with experimenting in the comic media. A fan asked: I just picked up a copy of "Trump", which is published by Hugh Hefner. It's a Kurtzman, Davis, Elder effort. And it was like MAD, only it was like three dimensional, and each drawing was rendered more like they're doing now on Anny Fanny. The reason it failed, I'm told, is because of a slight setback in Hefner's empire. If Hefner didn't hit a money crisis then, Trump would have continued. I've seen experiments like the National Lampoon, which show better directions. Do you think National will ever come out with anything like that, rendered in full color?

"Well, since I'm not a voice for National Per., I just do a lot of work there, I'll render my own opinion on that. National, and I think Marvel, and I think almost any publisher today is beginning to see the possibilities. The experiments they're going to have are going to knock your eyeballs out! A lot of experiments that happened in the past really weren't to the point, or they had bad luck attached to them, or bad business attached to them and they never really made it. This time, I hope they'll start making it. A lot of good heads are getting together and I think this'll really turn into something that'll dazzle you! Next time I come to the convention I expect to see some really bright faces of satisfaction on every one of the fans attending. Thank you."

Thank you, Neal. We hope your prediction comes true. But we're not optimistic.





SUPER FANS

From left to right:

ptain Marvel	Jay Pearlman
tman	Doug Aleksey
e Thing	Avery Seavy
e Phantom	Jerry Sincovec
e Vision	David Lumozoff
rnak	George Orentlicher
llow Kid	Allen Emanuel
e Pagan	Tom appears as himself
ing	Lin Carter
ash Gordon	Mark Wheatley
een Hyppolyta ot shown)	Gwenn Seuling
lomon Grundy	Tom Watkins

Prize Winners:

st	Solomon Grundy	Tom Watkins
nd	Captain Marvel	Jay Pearlman
rd	Queen Hyppolyta	Gwenn Seuling

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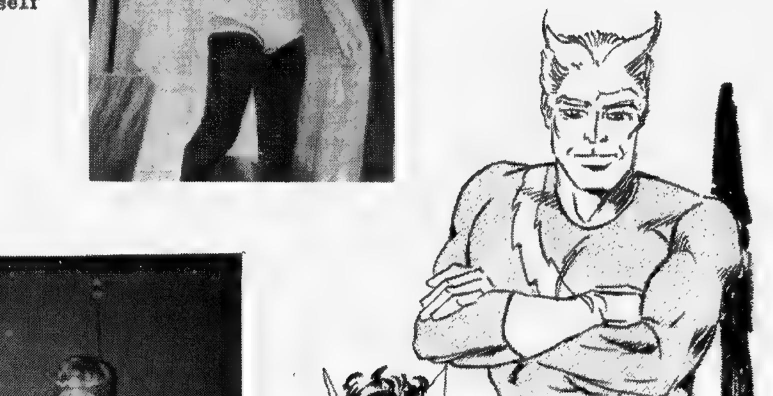
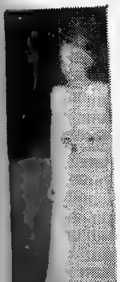
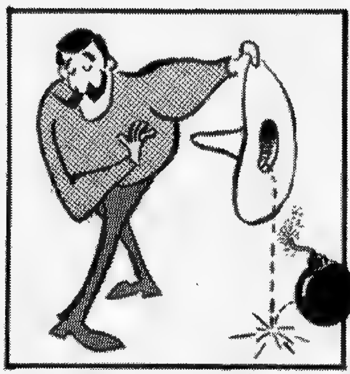
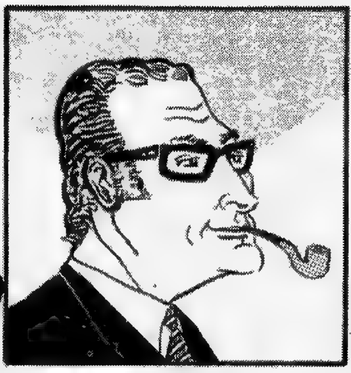


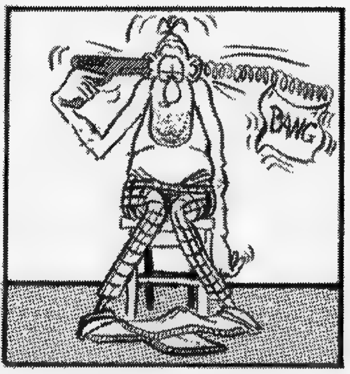




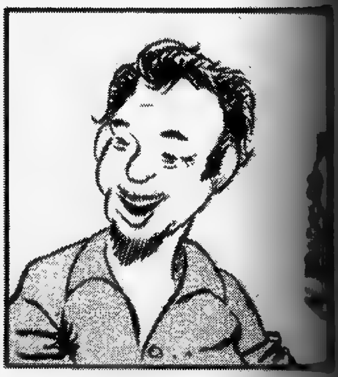
SERGIO ARAGONES



DAVE BERG

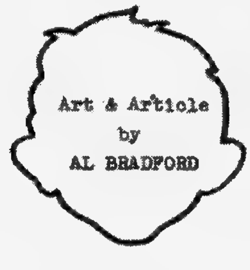


DON MARTIN



AL JAFFEE

THE MAD MEN



Art & Article
by
AL BRADFORD

John Putnam, executive art director of MAD Magazine, was the main speaker at a special slide show, and also presided over the kibitzing that followed. Four other MAD staff members, however, Dave Berg (The Lighter Side Of...), Sergio Aragones (those zany border cartoons) and Jerry DeFuccio and Nick Meglin (associate editors) were not adverse to chiming in with their own comments.

Truthfully speaking, most of the slide show was a disappointment, consisting mainly of old MAD covers and advertising satires, the majority of which most of the audience had seen. If the gags had lost anything with age however, one could not prove it by Putnam, who, white hair flying madly, gleefully read each caption, faithfully chortling at each gag, and pausing only to identify some of the people in the ad photos. At the end of each slide, Putnam would cackle insanily, jerk his arm upwards, and snap his fingers indicating that he wanted the next slide.

Not all the slides were taken directly from the magazine, however. Some of them were devoted to various giveaways and gimmicks MAD had offered over the years. Pointing at the slide of Aurora's Alfred E. Neuman plastic model, Putnam asked if anyone had actually bought one of the monstrosities. A smattering of the audience cried "I did!", to which Putnam sneered derisively, "Suckers!" One member of his audience had a repartee' that took Putnam momentarily aback. "I stole one!" he said. Putnam paused and then chuckled that he had probably paid approximately what the model was worth. Putnam went on to display what he presumed to be the only MAD Mobile ever built.

The highlights of the show, however, were the hitherto unreaveled glimpses of the MAD staff and offices. Fans sat up and drooled when Putnam displayed the special MAD Portrait each artist on the staff had drawn. Each artist had done his own portrait, with Mort Drucker filling in those of the writers. Putnam went on to display a series of MAD birthday gifts to publisher Bill Gaines--notably, a cash register with a different key for each MAD staffer (the $ sign for Gaines), and a nickleoden which alternated the usual nickleoden fare with shots of the staff gesturing obscenely at Gaines.

Slides of the staff tend to corroborate the theory that they are as MAD as the magazine itself--amongst the sleeping staffers is a giant life-size bust of King Kong, constructed from paper-mache by Sergio Aragones.

When asked if Gaines would ever return to the old EC line, Putnam replied, "No, Bill has a saying, 'Always go forward, never back!" This is forward?

Perhaps the best comment, however, came from Jerry DeFuccio, in answer to a fellow who wanted to know if the staff was worried about Dr. Frederick Wertham. "No," he replied. "Dr. Wertham is probably still out seducing the innocent."

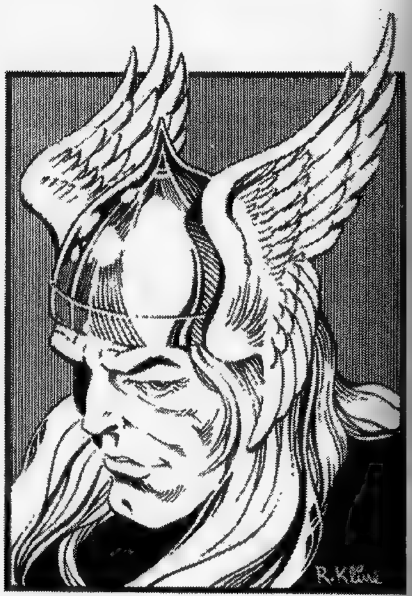
DAVE BERG

NICK MEGLIN, JOHN PUTNAM,
DAVE BERG, JERRY DE FUCCIO

SERGIO ARAGONES

At this point, let's take a little break in the Convention activities, to talk to a fan artist, many of you have been asking me to get some material from. He was at the Con and I talked, all too shortly, with him. I found him to be one of the most friendly guys around....MEET

BOB KLINE



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CC: Can you fill us in on your background--your age, what sort of schooling you've had, etc?

RK: I'm 23, I was raised in California, in the Los Angeles area. After high school, I attended Long Beach State College for two years and then enlisted in the Air Force, and I've been serving for three years. I work on Airman Magazine, the official magazine of the Air Force.

CC: What does your work on Airman entail, Bob?

RK: I'm called an illustrator, and I do some illustrating, but primarily I back up the art director and assist him in every way that I possibly can, in preparing his layouts for printing, and occasionaly doing drawings, when required.

CC: How far back does your art interest go?

RK: When I was very young, even before I went to public school, I was drawing pictures of cowboys. I used to watch TV a great deal, and the old western movies, then in vogue, did a lot to influence my subject matter. And of course, everyone draws in kindergarten, but I just never quit.

CC: Did you stand out, as a potential art talent, as far back as that?

RK: From what I remember, teachers did point to my work, even then, but naturally, it's all very hazy in my memory. I believe my mother still has some of my pre-school cowboy work, which I do remember more distinctly.

CC: It would be interesting to see them. How about high school?

RK: Sure--I drew for yearbooks, and did other high school projects, and I also had my first encounter with a professional art school. I earned a scolarship that involved six Saturdays of doing water color paintings, of landscapes and so on, on location. This got me away from strict pencil and ink work, and into painting.

CC: Now at what point along the way did comics first intrigue you?

RK: Well the first comic that really caught my attention was Turok, Son of Stone. I never saw the EC magazines, when I was young...I wish I HAD! But after Turok, my interest in comics quickly snowballed.

CC: And about how old were you then?

RK: Hmmm. That must have been in about 1954, or something like that. Prior to that, I had seen comics, but these were the first that caught my eye.

CC: Sixteen years later, Bob, what kind of comics do you prefer to read today?

RK: Primarily, it depends upon the illustrator. I find that in most cases, the quality of the art far exceeds that of the story line. Whatever my favorite illustrators draw, that's what I buy. This is not to say there are absolutely no good writers today. Archie Goodwin, Roy Thomas and Stan Lee are three of the very best. I lean towards Fantasy and SF, but the artwork comes first.

CC: And of these illustrators, who is your favorite?

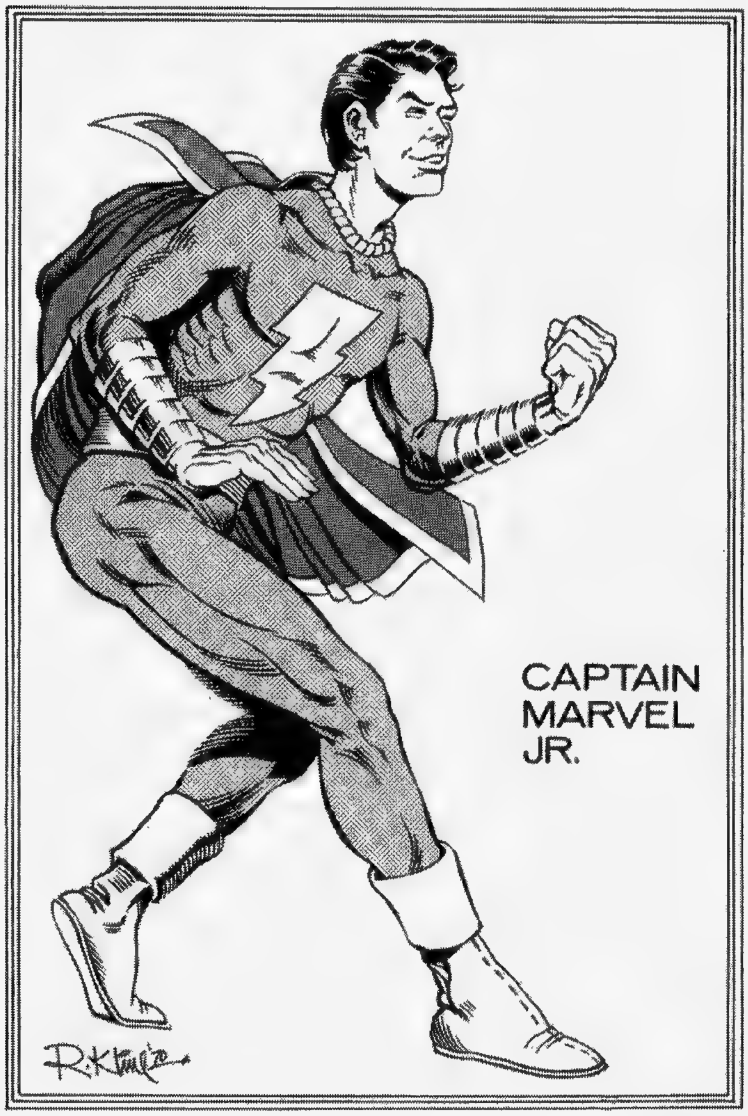
RK: Well, if I HAVE to pick a favorite, I'd say Frank Frazetta. He seems to be the most accomplished in the field. Hal Foster's work on Prince Valiant excites me nearly as much. Other favorites include Al Williamson, Wally Wood, Jim Steranko and John Buscema.

CC: Do you prefer SF and Fantasy to the super hero comics?

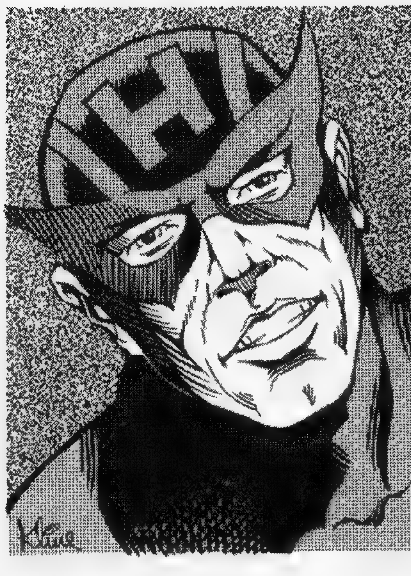
RK: I do. The primary reason is that super heroes, especially the way they are depicted today, are SF entities, rather than costumed crime fighters--the Captain Marvel,--most of them are SF characters, but they're just a small part, just an offshoot, of the whole, exciting realm of science fiction, which covers a much greater area than the super heroes alone. A muscled guy in tights isn't an end in itself, graphically speaking. In SF, you have a wider range to work with, and I prefer this, because I don't like to confine myself.

CC: As you look back, have any artists exerted any profound influence on your style?

RK: I'm sure that there are a number of influences--a tremendous number. There are illustrators whose work I will see on a magazine stand or elsewhere--that really gets the adrenalin going. It's thrilling--it's probably one of the most thrilling experiences in my life, just to look at this art. So I'd say there are a number of illustrators. Frazetta, I already mention



CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.



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, and also Foster. There are many very talented artists working in ics today--Neal Adams is one--painters, slick magazine painters have fected me--Bob Abbott is one.

Approaching that same question a bit differently, are there any tists working today who you feel are grossly under-rated?

Yes. Frank Kelly Freas, who works for Analog. He's a lot better most fans will give him credit for. He's one of the finest illustra- in the business.

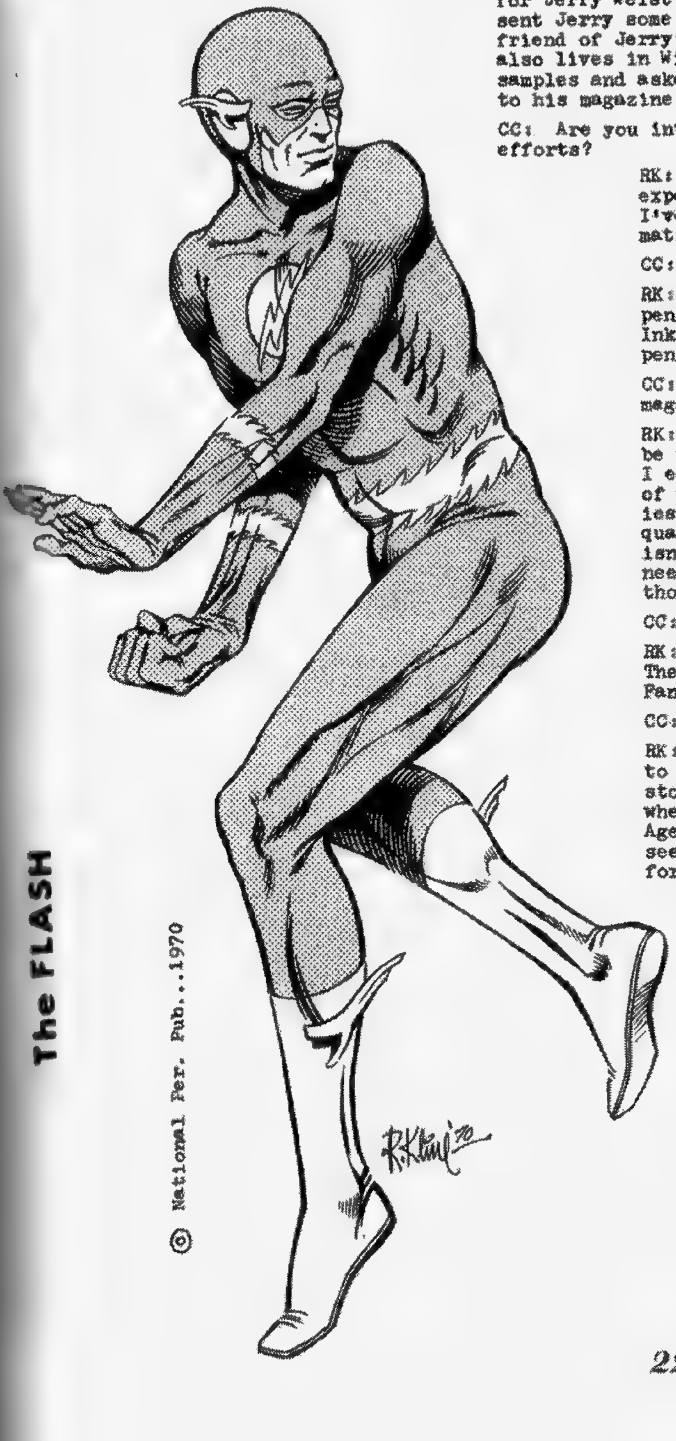
As an avid reader of SF and Fantasy, are there any books that stand in your mind?

All of E.R.B.'s works--Howard, of course, is close to my heart. I've a number of illustrations based on his stories. Ray Bradbury ranks hest on my list of the SF authors, and I also enjoy Keith Laumer and rt Heinlein.

Let's switch to fandom for a minute. What do you think fandom is all

Well, I've only been active in it for about a year now, and I'm sure there's a lot more to it than I realize. I haven't attended any cons, ept the New York one, for example. I think it's a very vital part of the dustry--there's no restraint on fandom, and so it's the place to look to new ideas. There's no concern with sales, so you can have experimenta-

How did you personally discover fandom, Bob?



The FLASH

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RK: I read an ad in Mad Magazine for Jerry Weist's Squa Tront. I sent Jerry some samples, and a close friend of Jerry's, Jan Strnard, who also lives in Wichita, saw my samples and asked that I contribute to his magazine, Anomaly.

CC: Are you interested in experimenting with other kinds of comic book efforts?

RK: I'd like to try my hand at as much as I can, experimenting with as many new techniques as possible. I've always been interested in motion pictures and animation. I'd like to become involved with this.

CC: In your comic work, do you prefer pencilling or inking?

RK: It's difficult to say, but I think I probably enjoy pencilling more, because that's where the creating is. Inking is more of a technique, requiring precision--all my pencil work is very comprehensive.

CC: In your opinion, what would be the ideal fanzine magazine?

RK: Well, I like to look for experimental strips--I'd be very select about what material goes into the fanzine--I enjoy reading interviews, featuring professional points of view with regard to the industry--and their philosophies and approaches. In short, the zine would stress quality, experimentation, and personalities. Fan Fiction isn't as intriguing to me as it is to others, but writers need this format. My ideal fanzine would feature strips though.

CC: Who do you think reads fanzines?

RK: Two groups--the ardent fans, and the professionals. The whole existance of fandom hinges upon the fanzine. Fandom wouldn't be very exciting without fanzines.

CC: Where do you think comics are headed for?

RK: Into an era of experimentation, as editors cast about to find a replacement for the declining heroes. The short story horror magazines mark the begining of a new era, but whether it will be as booming an era as the second Golden Age, heralded by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, remains to be seen. The Romance and Teenage Magazines will come to the fore more, as will Westerns and War magazines.

I'd like to see anthology types increase in number. You are always dealing with different characters and situations here, and you aren't tied down to a specific and restricting format.

CC: Do you think the decline of the super-hero has anything to do with the decline of authority figures in society--doctors, lawyers, etc.?

RK: Maybe not authority figures specifically, but perhaps in general. Youngsters are beginning to realize that the super hero is the most ridiculous, outlandish form of human being, because he has no faults whatsoever. And they can't buy that. They can't identify.

CC: Great. In one stroke you alienate both Stan Lee AND Steve Ditko.

CC: Then you believe that fanzines are very avant-garde?

RK: Yes, and they always will be. The fanzine editor isn't satisfied with the type of material currently on the market.

CC: What advice would you offer to the budding fanzine artist?

BK: I received my most memorable piece of advice from a pro illustrator. He said, "Go drown yourself."

CC: Great.

BK: Seriously, it's difficult to become a successful illustrator. Competition is incredible, but two prerequisites for success are an awful lot of hard work, and a burning desire--you have to love your work above all else. Talent always plays a part, but that's a very nebulous area--you have to force yourself to create.

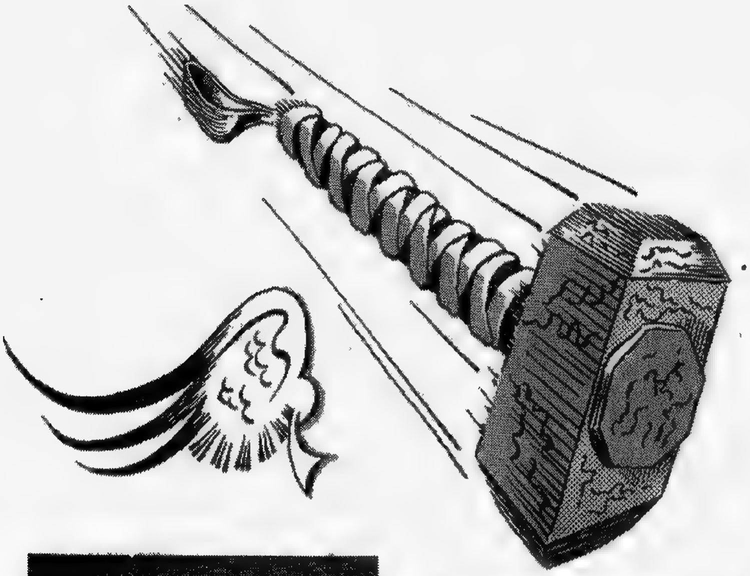
CC: Turning to newspapers, do you have any favorites there?

BK: Yes, but oddly enough, they're the humor strips. The straight stuff has become soap-opera. The few adventure strips still hanging on--X-9, Flash Gordon, Russ Manning's Tarzan, which is a great strip. As good, if not better than any of the previous Tarzan's. It has a very poor circulation though. My favorites are Peanuts, B.C., Wizard of Id and Pogo.

CC: Do you think the weak story lines, which you dislike in comic books, might disappear with the successful team-up of a great artist and a fine writer?

BK: It's happened in the past, usually when the writer comes from OUTSIDE the comic industry. For example... Ray Bradbury's adaptations in EC. Kurtzman was a great writer, of course. I think illustrators have a higher degree of motivation than the writers--at least, I get this feeling, but I don't know how true it is. I hope more writers will become more interested.

CC: I want to thank Bob for this interview and the fine illustrations that accompanied it. He is truly one of fandom's finer talents. I'm sure you fans, as well as myself, will be looking forward to more work from Bob Kline, in the years ahead.

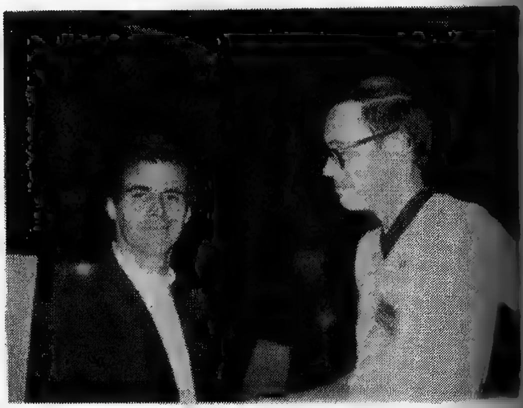


CONVENTION SHOTS

Art...Anthony Kowalik

Photos...Bradford, Black and O'Neil

Dialog...Cosgrove and Greim

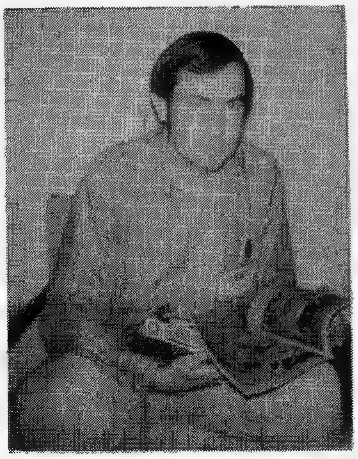


Al Williamson and Marty meet. (M.L.G.) It was like meeting Flash Gordon in person.

Roy Thomas - Marvel Comics top writer, editor extraordinary, raconteur rapid.

(Jean Thomas)
Roy? Roy who?

Wally Wood -
Where would comics be without Wally Wood and who would I swipe the Defender shots from?



Bill Black - a talent I can't say enough about. Without Bill and Bob Cosgrove, you probably wouldn't be reading this issue. OK Bill, put the comic away. Didn't your mother ever tell you they're bad for you?

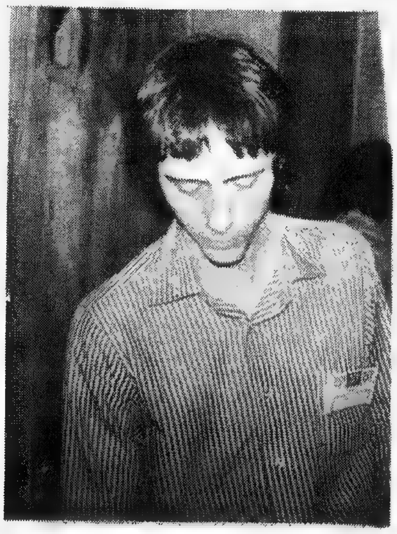
(Wally Wood)
It's like this kid--I only look like Dynamo when I turn on my belt.

(Archie Goodwin)
Alright kid! Give Marvin back his comic book.

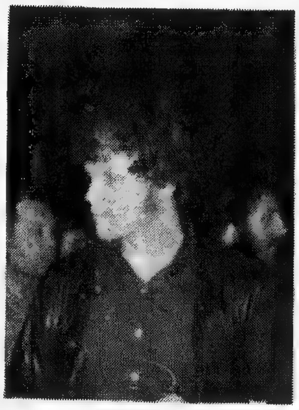
(Bill Black and M.L.G.)
Marty, did you give Marvin back his comic book?

(Jim Steranko)
Thus, when the inexorable helix of light clashes with the geometrical rythm, the symetry of the structural synth---------

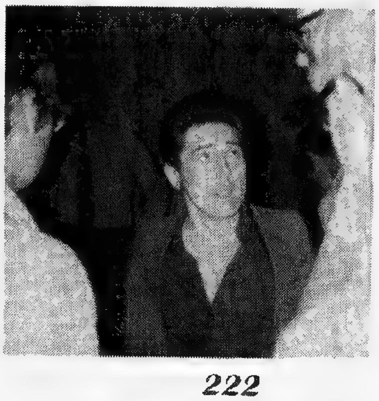
(Len Wein)
Glynis! You beautiful creature, with hair like silk. At last I've found you!



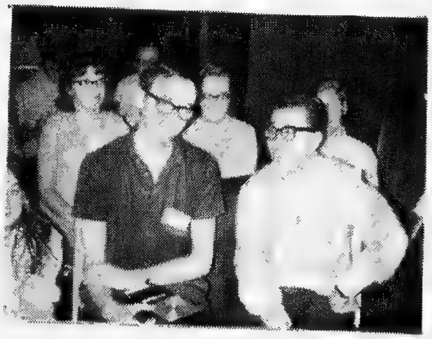
(Above) Jeff Jones
(Below) Vaughn Bode



Marty, is it my imagination, or are you growing?



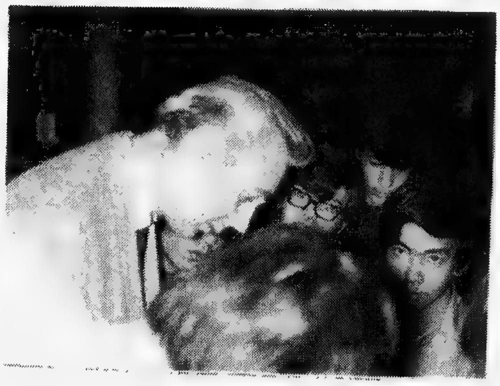
(Rich Buckler)
Knock it off, stupid. Glynis is over there.



(Mike Royer)
Oh yeah, Warren? Well Bob and Marty don't think you're so tough either! Nyahh!

(Mike Royer) again?
Look Marty! I never thought Steranko would have enough guts to wear that outfit.

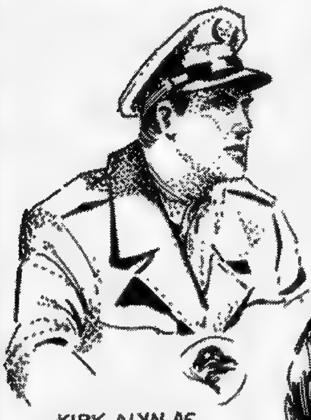
(M.L.G.)
Yeah, but he still dosen't look a bit like Flash Gordon.



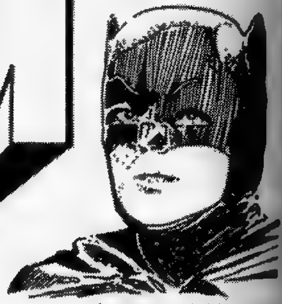
(Gil Kane)
So help me, if one more lousy kid asks me to autograph Steranko's "History of Comics", I'll stuff it down his throat!

SUPER HEROES ON FILM

BY William BLACK

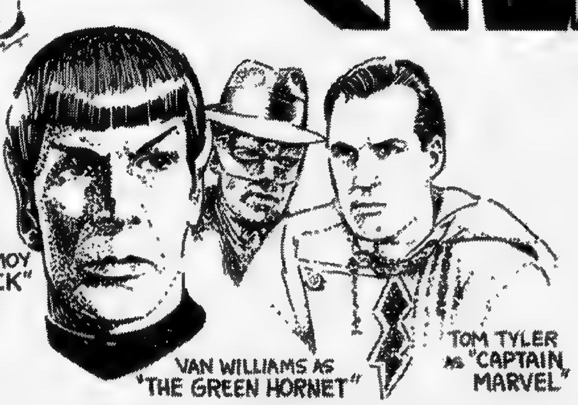


KIRK ALYN AS "BLACKHAWK"



ADAM WEST AS "BATMAN"

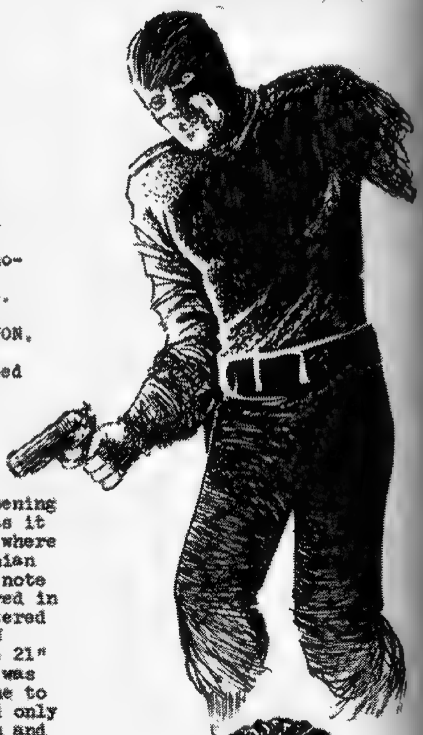
PAUL KELLY AS "THE BLACK COMMANDO"



LEONARD NIMOY AS "SPOCK"

VAN WILLIAMS AS "THE GREEN HORNET"

TOM TYLER AS "CAPTAIN MARVEL"



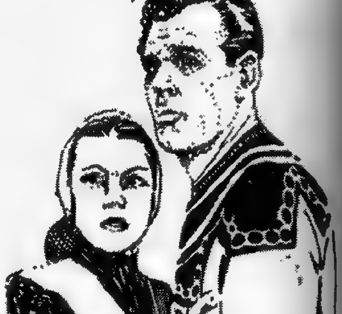
THE FILMS presented at the 1970 Comic Con provided the fans with a varied selection of subject matter that spanned over 30 years. Super heroes of the serials were intertwined with the "camp" heroes of recent TV productions. Dinosaurs once more stalked the streets of New York.

The first film was a short subject of what appeared to be the late 1940's. It dealt with comic strips, rather than comic books. Many famous artists were shown at work. Milton Caniff, creator of TERRY AND THE PIRATES and STEVE CANYON, was shown posing live models in his studio to get the right positions and expressions. Production techniques of how syndicated comic strips are distributed to newspapers throughout the country, via paper matts, was interesting. One hatchet-faced woman spoke out about the evils of comic books and the hideous effect they have on children. She was instantly "booed." A young Al Capp then answered her assertions and came to the comic's defense. Good or bad, the comics have endured and are still read by millions of faithful followers throughout the world.

"Faster than a speeding bullet..." The audience echoed the now famous opening announcement as they viewed the very first episode of the SUPERMAN TV series as it appeared in 1951. We were wisked through space to the distant planet KRYPTON where the serious scientist JOR-EL (portrayed by Robert Rockwell) warned the Kryptonian council of the forthcoming destruction of their planet. It is interesting to note that Stuart Randall, the actor who strongly opposed Jor-El's theory, was attired in the old CAPTAIN MARVEL costume (from the serial of the same name) that was altered only by a Flash Gordon-like neck piece. Was this a premonition of the CAPTAIN MARVEL - SUPERMAN clash yet to come? The technical effects, bad enough on the 21" TV screen, were even more obvious on the larger screen. The tiny rocket that was so crudely rivotted together, couldn't make it out of Jor-El's window let alone to the far distant Earth. Yet it did...nose first. It traveled all that way and only embedded the nose of the rocket about a foot and a half into the ground! Ebon and Sarah Kent, two local red-necks, happen by to save the infant son of Jor-El and Lara from the burning sheet metal. They raise the child as their own but soon notice that he is different. Young Clark has a heart-to-heart talk with his foster mother, "Mom, how come I'm different than the other boys?" "Well, Clark," replies Sarah, "maybe if you wouldn't wear that dress all the time..." But all things worked out. Clark grew up to become George Reeves and turned in his dress for blue and red tights. The rest is history.

Of the serials shown, only CAPTAIN MARVEL, The Copperhead (in MYSTERIOUS DR. SATAN) and DRUMS OF FU MANCHU were permitted an entire chapter. Many previews of action serials were interspersed between reels. These included Kirk Alyn as Blackhawk, Ralph Byrd as The Vigilante, Congo Bill, Paul Kelly as The Black Commando in THE SECRET CODE (it may be of interest to note here, that the very first comic strip that I ever drew was based on the BLACK COMMANDO), Victor Jory as the Green Archer, The Iron Claw, two Buster Crabbe serials, that used the same footage in both films, The Monster and The Ape, Hop Harrigan, and others.

Many TV spot ads, comprised yet another reel. These included Adam West as BATMAN, Van Williams as THE GREEN HORNET, STAR TREK, TIME TUNNEL, LOUSED-UP IN SPACE, and fortunately not LAND OF THE GIANTS. One interesting reel featured some animation effects, most of which were created by Ray Harryhausen. These were EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS, THE GIANT BEHEMOTH, a lengthly color segment from VALLEY OF THE GWANGI, and the entire last reel of BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS. Unfortunately, time did not permit John Mansfield, a Canadian fan, to show the two complete AVENGERS episodes he had brought along. Maybe next year??



ROBERT ROCKWELL AS "JOR-EL"

And Now COMIC CRUSADER Presents

THE WARREN AWARDS

© Warren Publishing Co, Inc. 1970.

Article by: COSGROVE & GREIM
Art by: Martin L. Greim

Once again, it was that time of year that everyone awaits with baited breath--time for the WARREN AWARDS, or, to use their true name, The Frazetta Awards. Outside of Jim Warren's immediate family, there were a few other people interested in the ceremonies, most of them award recipients.

Warren, in characteristic fashion, introduced the man who was to introduce him, Phil Seuling. Phil introduced Jim Warren as a man who "needs no introduction," and the award ceremonies were officially underway.

Warren led off by telling of his strenuous efforts to gather his entire staff together for a "team" photo. Finally, he said, he had managed to do it, and he was so proud of the official results, that before printing it in a future issue of Creepy he decided to share it with the con attendees. On the convenient nearby screen flashed a shot from the movie Planet of the Apes.

His opening witticisms concluded, Warren began ticking off the names of his staff, most of whom were present in the audience to take appropriate bows. One thing about Jim Warren...He's tremendously proud of his staff. He may make jokes about them, but underneath this facade you can tell he thinks of them as tops. As Warren introduced his slave labor, he jokingly related an obscene story carefully selected to suit the character of the individual staff member. "Rich Buckler", he announced, "comes into our office once a week, he's always late with a story. We strip him, beat him, humiliate and insult him, degrade him horribly, and he pays us five dollars and goes home happy."

"You know", he related, "as I walked into the lobby, a little girl approached me, and she said, 'Are you Nicola Cuti?'"
"I said 'Yes'".
"She said, 'Can I have your autograph?'"
"I just told her 'NO!' and when she asked why not, I said 'Because I can't write.'"
"'I know,' she said, 'I've read some of your stories!"
Many a true word is often said in jest, eh Jim.
"Over here", Warren said, pressing his attack, "is a talented writer, Marv Wolfman. Take a bow, Marv. Marv is also one of the best arguments I know for birth control."

The introductions over, Jim Warren plunged into the award ceremonies themselves. The awards are massive gold cups and statues, statues which Warren claims are representations of Frederick Wertham clutching his groin. Acceptance speeches were concise, as each award winner present merely stepped forward and accepted his prize before taking a seat on the podium for the panel which was to follow. Winners were as follows, and in a few cases, Bob Cosgrove has taken the liberty of expressing a dissenting opinion.

The Ray Bradbury Cup for Best Story in a Warren Magazine: Tom Sutton, for Snowman in Creepy 31. (B.C.'s choice, "Death is a Lonely Place", possibly the finest story of 1970, appearing in Creepy #32, by Bill Warren.)

The Frank Frazetta cup for best illustrated story, to Neal Adams for "Rock God" in Creepy #32. (BC - While Neal Adams is by far Warren's best illustrator, Rock God was a total flop in my book. The choice here, is again, "Death is a Lonely Place," illustrated by William Black.)

The Jack Davis Cup for best cover went to Frank Frazetta for the cover to Eerie #23.

The regular awards completed, Warren announced the presentation of three more special awards, which were as follows:

A special award to Harlan Ellison for "Rock God". (BC still sticks with his original opinion. I.E., you turned the last page of Rock God expecting to see the end of the story, and instead discover that you just saw the end of the story. It is easily one of the worst pieces of writing I have read over the past year.)

Recipient of "Best All-Around Artist" Cup was Ernie Colan, while Nicola Cuti copped the writing award.

Then Jim announced what has to be the most well-deserved award of the entire convention. In a surprise move, Jim Warren presented a beautiful gold trophy to Phil Seuling, in recognition of his efforts in behalf of comic art. The applause was ear-splitting.

But Warren had not yet exhausted his bag of tricks and triumphs. "Recently", he gravely announced, "a young man came into our office with a portfolio. You've probably never heard of him. He's an unknown. But we were so impressed with his stuff, we gave him a position with our company. We made him the editor of a new, adult magazine we're going to be putting out, which will sell for a dollar. His work looks--it looks something like Wally Wood's work. I don't know if he's in the audience.

Frank Frazetta
and
Tom Sutton

Nicola Cuti
and
Ernie Colan

Left:
Jim Warren
and
Tom Sutton

Right:
Jim Warren
and
Neal Adams

but if he is---Wally Wood, will you stand up please." He was, and he did, and again, the applause was loud and enthusiastic--it was quite a triumph for Warren, although some fans expressed fear that it would put an end to Woods fine Doctor Doom strip over at Marvel.

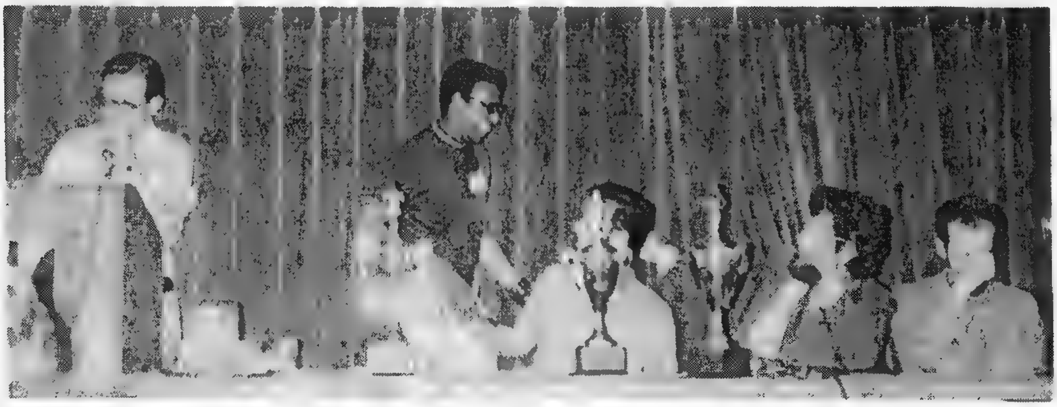
The panel then followed. A lot of the Warren staff, including Adams and Frazetta, were present, but the questions tended to be nonsensical and the answers from the artists equally uninspired. The true star of the show was Warren, who, when asked about the "morality of horror comics", declared "There is no such thing as a 'moral' or 'immoral' comic book. Comics are either good or bad. That is all."

Why the recent full page appeal to end the war in Vietnam? Warren declared that it was a "business decision." Everytime there is a riot, a confrontation between cop and revolutionary, sales plunge. Pretty soon, Warren felt, America was going to go out of business, which would have a rather profound effect on the success of Warren Publishing. If, in any small way, the ad helped in ending the War, Warren felt it a sound investment, and promised that come October, he would run a page containing the stand (Hawk or Dove) of every member of congress, in an attempt to influence the Nov. elections. "Denny O'Neil", he revealed, "has just written a story for us, featuring the President and the Pentagon. I can't say anything about it, but we'll both probably end up in the same federal stockade." It's reported that the story will feature President Nixon as a ghoul, and if this is true, it appears to be in appallingly poor taste. Taste, however, has never been characteristic of either Warren, or his publications, although both, more importantly, are entertaining, and can thus be forgiven almost all indiscretions.

Discussing complaints, Warren spoke of negative comments from parents in regard to Billy Graham's girls, and pathetically added that he felt his artists had an excellent understanding of anatomy, and he would rather have young lads learning about girls from his books than from "so-called" teachers. Right, Jim. Hah!

Warren also related an amusing story about a call he had received complaining that Warren was degrading a great spiritual leader, Billy Graham, by using his name in a horror magazine. Jim finally managed to convince his irate reader that Billy Graham was in fact the artist's name, but if he ever gets another artist named Oral Roberts, he's going to be in B-I-G-G-G trouble.

Jim Warren Billy Graham Frank Frazetta Tom Sutton Nicola Cuti



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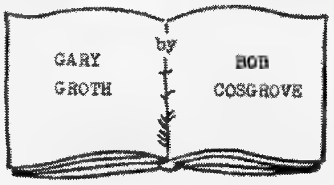
by

COMIC ART & EDUCATION



by

GARY GROTH

BOB COSGROVE

Intermountain Indian Boarding School is one of the most unique educational institutions in the world, and is the largest co-educational boarding school operated by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. An average of 2,000 Navajo Indian students are enrolled, and most of these do not speak English. Thus, when they begin school, they are taught "English as a Second Language." As the Indians must master the English language to be successful in school and on the job, it is perhaps the most vital portion of the curriculum.

What has all this to do with comics, and more particularly, the 1970 Convention of Comic Art? It has this to do with it: For the better part of 15 years, fandom has been saying that comics are not merely something for slow learners to read before "graduating" to "good" books, but rather, a major, uniquely American communications media, and now, at Intermountain Indian Boarding School, and at some of the schools located in underpriviledged districts in New York City, educators are beginning to say the same thing. No one was more aware of this than English Teacher/Convention Organizer Phil Seuling, who invited Glen Johnson, English teacher at Intermountain's Language Laboratory and originator of the comic teaching format, to discuss his program at the 1970 Con. Also participation was Byron Priess, a young man who has been working with National Comics in a program designed to help teach English in the New York Schools. In addition to the usual crew of National heroes and heroines, artist-editor Joe Kubert has created some materials especially for the program.

As Johnson and Priess explained it, the two groups of children, coming from radically different backgrounds, face similar problems. They are "over-age" in grade according to National norms, and haven't the slightest particle of interest in reading about the exciting adventures of Dick, Jane and Sally. In the case of the Navajo children, the teachers are not only faced with an age barrier, but also with the difficulties of orienting Indians who have grown up in geographic and dominat-culture isolation.

Like any good comic fan, Johnson subscribed to the theory that one picture is worth a thousand words (in Roy Thomas' case, several thousand) and decided to show his audience exactly how the Intermountain program was executed by employing slides, and a recording of his class at Intermountain. The strip chosen for the demonstration? Peanuts, by Charles Schulz. The projector clicked on, showing the first panel from a Snoopy sequence. Charlie was addressing his canine compatriot as follows: "While our family goes on vacation, you can either stay at the kennell or a neighbors house."

Then, over the tape, Glen's voice: "What is a kennell?"

"A place where dogs can go when they can't stay at home."

"What's the dog's name?"

"Snoopy!"

"What's Snoopy doing?"

"He's not listening."

"Good. How else could you say that?"

"He's not--he's not paying attention."

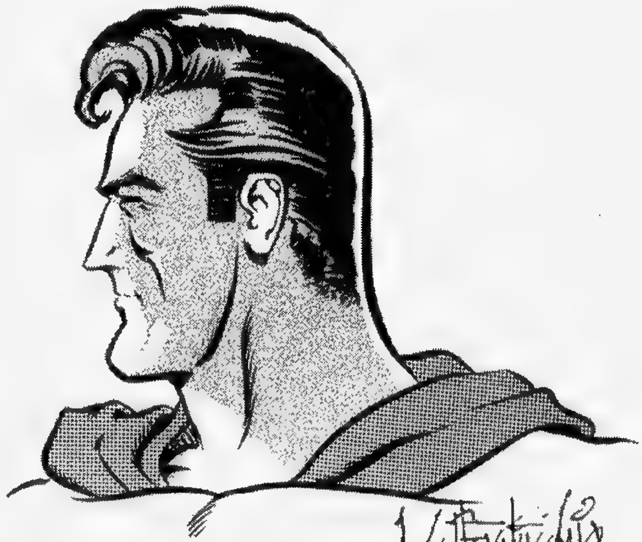
Glen, in discussing the many techniques he employs, explained that originally, he simply passed out a comic book or strip to each student, but found that some students read ahead, and payed no attention to what he was discussing. Thus, he abandoned it in favor of the slide system.

It's been interesting to Glen to see which strips become favorites. Tarzan, by Russ Manning, is an all time favorite, and Juliet Jones scores high with the girls. Modern humor, such as the Wizard of Id, B.C., and The Dropouts, are almost meaningless, unless the idioms and jokes are discussed and explained. In some cases, Glen, with the permission of the writers and artists, has rewritten the dialogue to aid student comprehension--one famous example: Steve Canyon, by Milton Caniff. The teachers at Interstate have already used different strips to convey different aspects of American society--Rex Morgan, for example, vividly portrays the dangers of dope addiction. In the future, Glen hopes to correlate various comic strips with science and social studies.

Priess, attempting to explain the New York program, passed out copies of Kubert's special drawings, and explained his own personal involvement with the program. Priess is a young man, not yet out of college, who has been turned on to education, after turning education on to comics. "Teachers are learning that education doesn't have to be boring," Priess said, explaining the initial successess of the infant program. As with Johnson, Priess soon learned that different comic books appealled to different students; just as Terry and the Pirates proved too difficult for the lower level Navajo groups, so Green Lantern proved tough going for the lower ghetto youth groups.

Unfortunatly, Priess' educational skills were far superior to his abilities as an auctioneer, a fact which quickly became apparent to all those attending the afternoon auction, held for the benefit of the Tilden School Annex in West Philadelphia. Even though National was sponsering the auction, Marvel threw in 15 pieces of artwork, including some by Kirby, and Diamond Jim Warren, of Warren Publications, tossed in five drawings of Uncle Creepy, rendered by Jack Davis. Priess, as previously mentioned, didn't do much to encourage sales. For example, instead of the traditional "going once, going twice," Byron developed a penchant for beginning with "gone". This combined with an unusually thrifty audience, accounted for Jack Kirby art going for $35 a page, or, of all things, a Neal Adams/Nick Cardy double page spread which went for only #13.00. Nevertheless, the auction raked in a grand total of $1,700, and at least another $500 is expected from three other conventions.

This minor flaw did little to diminish Priess' infectious enthusiasm, as he explained about National's newly formed unit, EDUGRAPHICS, to aid teachers upon request. Those interested in learning more about the new EDUGRAPHICS unit may write: FRANK NEURHEAH c/o National Per. Pub. 909 Third Ave. New York, N.Y. 10002.



SUPERMAN 1940

Comic Books: Quo Vadis?

As comic books can be said to mirror the times; more than ever the same holds true for their creators...particularly those of today. You don't believe it? Well to be on the safe side, better take a closer look at the comics you've been buying. Their kind may not be around very much longer. And the change is liable to arrive faster than you might guess.

There's a new feeling in America; a need to cast off yesterday's skin, a desire for change and breaking with codes. An anxiety to be original and vibrant. There's a different breed of people demanding better things on all levels. And as young people are making their opinions known, so are the young creators at work in the comic book industry of the 1970's.

How long the comic book field will continue...or even if it will continue, is a matter of speculation. Something, though, is going to happen one way or another, a something that will either kill or cure. Panelists at the 1970 Comic Art Convention made that plainer than plain. Asked to discuss, "The Direction Of Comic Books In The 1970's," the participants responded with razor-sharp statements and caustic criticism, in cold hard tones.

Declaring publicly their war against the old fashion and the apathetic were panel members, Dick Giordano, moderator; Neal Adams, Archie Goodwin, Gray Morrow, Denny O'Neil, Johnny Romita, Roy Thomas and James Warren.

Adams forcefully spearheaded the attack with comments like: "If actual decisions are not put in the hands of the creators soon... comic books are going out of business. Every creative guy in the field has a product he wants to work on, but usually he isn't given the chance... We are running out of patience. The creative people are going to go out on their own."

Adams expressed the hope a day is coming when comic book companies will say to the creative people in their employ..."Great! You handle the book; We'll handle the dough." Adams indicated if this doesn't eventually happen...."Well, we'll do it on our own," (meaning produce their own comic books).

Goodwin backed up the statements with similar observations of his own. He contended comics are going to change in format; they will be of different sizes and shapes, both in paperback and hardcover. "They'll be done by different teams of writers and artists," Goodwin explained. "The product will be brought to the publisher, rather than the publisher handing out assignments."

Gray Morrow described "a full spectrum of change" within comics as now known. "There'll be comics that are educational and at the same time entertaining...There'll be comics for ethnic groups...There'll be comics for all age levels."

Publisher Warren said flatly, the only comics as we know them that will be in existence at the end of the 1970's will be the likes of Walt Disney and Casper The Ghost. "Comics in the 70's are going where the money is, and that's in paperbacks and ten dolar-hardcover books."

Giordano offered his own views concerning package, price and product. "First of all new material is needed. Then changes are needed in the price structure and in the editorial structure." He cautioned these changes would take time; they couldn't happen immediately. "Make the package bigger and more 'palatable' for those who don't enjoy juvenile literature," Giordano continued. "You can't make a reasonable profit with a 15-cent product," not when financial returns are shared as they are now - four ways between the publishers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers." Giordano doubted adult comic books, if and when they are put it production, will be submitted for approval by the Code.

Furthering that statement on the code, all the panelists agreed the Code as it now stands is "too restrictive." They urged the audience to stop complaining about the Code among themselves and instead take constructive action by writing The Comic Code Authority, making their veiws known and offering valid changes.

Deploring what he termed "wishy-washy" attitudes often encountered from managerial powers, Roy Thomas declared the companies are not really ready for new material. A "runaround" happens, Thomas said, when new material is offered and excuses are made to squelch new ideas that could easily lead to new and exciting directions. Marvel hopes eventually to create an older, maturer Spiderman, thus offering a character to appeal to a wider audience than present story lines do now.

Romita commented on the two Spiderman Spectaculars, saying they were originally to have been done without Code approval, but "pressure" was brought to bear and that idea was cancelled. Both books were successful regardless. Technical problems of printing prevented any more.

A desire for creative freedom and a readiness to fight for it was expressed by all the members of the panel.

Denny O'Neil..."No one up here who can't moonlight on other jobs...If 'push comes to shove,' then we'll quit and let them whistle..."

Goodwin..."All of us want to work on special projects. We're willing to find a way to do regular work and special projects too..."

Summing up the panel discussion, Giordano said: "We don't think publishers are three-headed monsters, but the comic book business is in a state of flux and everybody has a solution to the problem. We think our solution will work and we want it given a try. We hope we will be here ten years from now, still talking to you about comics.

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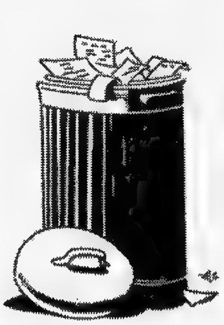
MIKE ROYER '70

Article by:
TOM FAGAN



From the Circular File

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02026.

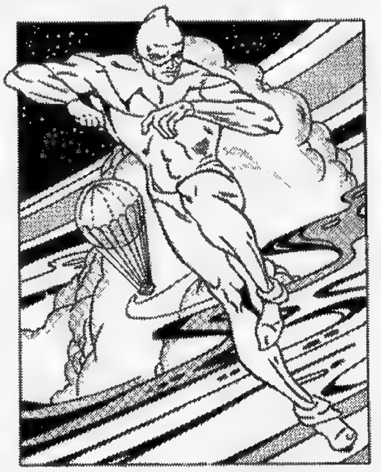
BRUCE V. KALNINS
[illegible]27 Empress Ave
Willowdale, Ontario.
Canada.

"The times, they are a changin'"
- Bob Dylan

In keeping pace with this changing of the times, we see a changing of people. Maturation? Perhaps. I'd be inclined to call it something else: awareness. An awareness of the total world surrounding us and what it holds for us; life is waiting to be seized. All that is required of us is to look beyond ourselves and more importantly, to look beyond our own little world. Yes, our own world of comic books and fandom which we have created and to which we retreat.

Recently, my attitudes to comics have changed quite drastically, to say the least. The first idea that I discarded was the thematic collection of comics by titles, characters or eras. Let's face it, a character is only as good as the people who are presently controlling it. If a particular character or title is continually being developed and explored by the same staff members, then, by all means, collect him. Otherwise, you're wasting your money.

Regarding a collection by an era, this is another point that I find very discouraging. If someone offered me a collection of Golden Age comics, I wouldn't accept them. Why? Simply because of the fact that the stories and art in that particular period were unbelievably bad. Therefore, I question the validity of such articles as "The Ray" and "The Saga of Bulls Eye". I will admit that I have not seen any issues of these titles, but are they really the fascinating peices of stories and art that you described them as?? Both of the articles were well written, but solely from your description of the plots involved, I would consider the scripts very poor. Terribly cliche'. Just to further expand my point, I recently picked up a copy of Air Fighters Comics, featuring Airboy and The Heap. (I didn't buy it, just read it in the store). From Tom Fagan's descriptive three-issue article, I expected miracles. All I received was the same CHUD I would have expected from any other Golden Age mag.



THE RAY IS BORN by

Concerning art for The Ray, I will agree that Reed Crandall is a fine illustrator To-Day! I would have to see his work from the forties before I would extend any congratulations on his Ray strip. Many people confuse the level an artist has reached to-day with the fact that he was at this same level twenty years ago. I have yet to hear of an artist instantly turning out quality work the minute he starts to work in the comics field and then never rising above his present level. An example to reinforce this confusion of excellence would be Al Williamson's work for EC. Some of it was very bad! At times, he was nowhere near the peak that he's reached to-day; however, most people will naturally assume that the work he did do for EC was exactly the same as the work he's done today.

Reed Crandall brings me to my next point, artwork. I have reached the stage where a realistic, possible, well-drawn piece of art is essentially what I am after. With a few exceptions, the scripts in comics now might as well all be termed one huge cliche' with little thought or imagination present. Even a contemporary attempt at a graphic story, such as the new Green Lantern - Green Arrow, is still very unoriginal and certainly its basic concept (the search for America) is a direct steal from the theme of "Easy Rider." Returning to artwork, I mentioned a "realistic" piece of work. When artists such as Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko have become so stylized to the point that all of their characters have lost any human likeness, then I ask myself are these men true artists?? Would they be accepted anywhere else?? Certainly not! The only reason they're working in the comics field is because they're not accepted anywhere else. And don't give me any of that bull about a love for the medium itself. When someone as talented as Neal Adams turns away from a high paying advertising job to work for comics then I call it a love for the medium. Also I hear a lot about an artist's "style" (which is probably why you accept Kirby and Ditko). Isn't style being mistaken for inability?? When someone tells me that a particular artist has a style, I'm naturally assuming that he is able to draw realistically and is merely extending his talent. If this is the case, then why does Kirby insist upon drawing grotesque characters and features when he is "supposed to" be able to draw as realistically as Adams. If he supposedly had this realism, he could also be doing work for an advertising agency, with comics as a sideline and in the end be making much more money than he is now. Obviously, Kirby has never had this "choice" between realism and grotesqueness; therefore we all refer to his work as having a certain "style". (What it actually means is that he can't draw any other way!) The same arguement holds true for Ditko and a lot of the other stylized artists.

Compared to the artwork in the rest of fandom, Comic Crusader #9 had some of the best. However, by professional, artistic standards, it had some of the worst art I've ever seen. I don't understand why you, Martin, and the rest of fandom regard William Black so highly. I ordered his "Paragon" and it was a sheer waste of money. Except for some interesting graphics, the artwork by Black was at its lowest point. Likewise, "Nigh of the Shade," in CC #9. I must congratulate you though, for printing that fantastic cover by Steranko. Now that alone was easily worth the 35¢. In regard to the sketch of Daredevil by Gene Colan, I have to say again, a very poor piece of art. Please do not print professional artwork simply for the sake that it was done by a professional. Many fanzines end up advertising that they have piles of pro work, but when the issue is received, all that is seen is a lot of hurried scribblings from a badgered pro, at a time when he couldn't care less. The Joe Sinnott interview typified the average fan interview with little or nothing having been learned about who Joe Sinnott really is. All that we've been given is a heap of statistical and biographical material. The drawing by Sinnott had obviously such a Kirby influence that I find it hard what to think of it.

You may be asking, what is my solution, what is my ultimate fanzine? Well, if I was to explain, I could go on for another five pages, but, as of now, I just don't have time. At this moment, my interests are turning more towards the prozines e.g. Spa-Fon, Witzend, Graphic Story Magazine, where a greater emphasis is placed on fine illustration and in depth discussions of the comic medium itself. As you've already noticed, I haven't ordered the next issue of Comic Crusader and I doubt if I will. No hard feelings, Martin, but as I said before: "The Times, They Are A Changin'".

THIS LETTER CONTAINED SO MANY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE COMIC INDUSTRY AND COMIC CRUSADER THAT I DECIDED TO PRINT IT IN ITS ENTIRETY, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A LONG ONE. WHEN BOB COSGROVE SAW IT, HE SHOOK HIS HEAD AND ASKED IF HE MIGHT BE THE ONE TO ANSWER IT. I THINK BOB'S ANSWER SHOULD SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

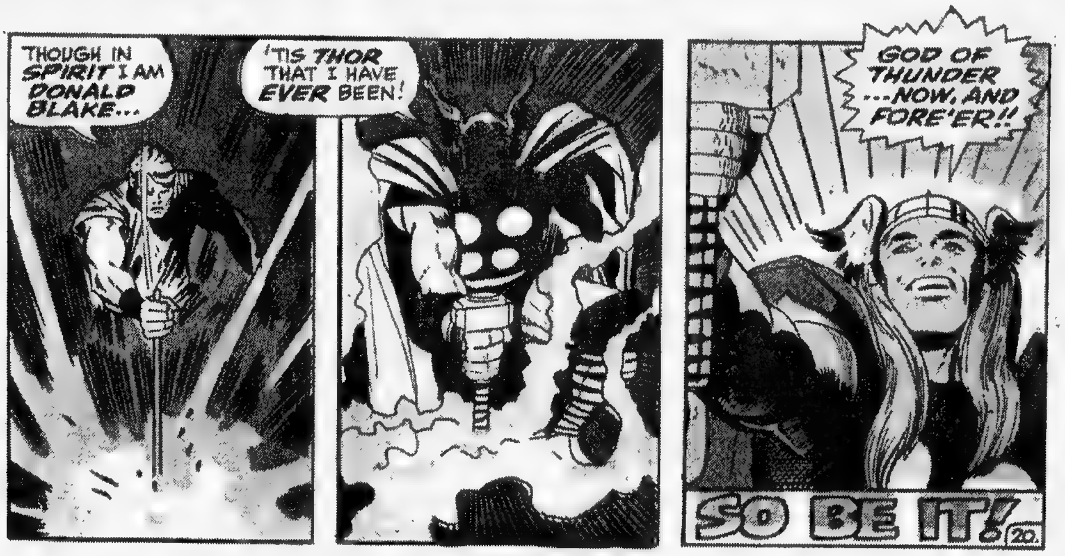
Dear Bruce,

To be honest, your letter indicates to me that your understanding of comic art, insofar as you understand it at all, exists only on the most crude and superficial basis. But before demolishing some of your massive misconceptions, it will perhaps behoove me to examine some of your initial points and criticisms.

First, you tell us all about your new "awareness." You have, you explain, escaped from that shallow world of fandom into which the rest of us "retreat." From this lofty height, you dish out your observations. Get down off your perch, mister. I for one LIVE in that real world. I don't regard fandom or comics as some sort of cocoon in which to hide. The fact that you did, or that someone you know did, tells more about you than it does about fandom.

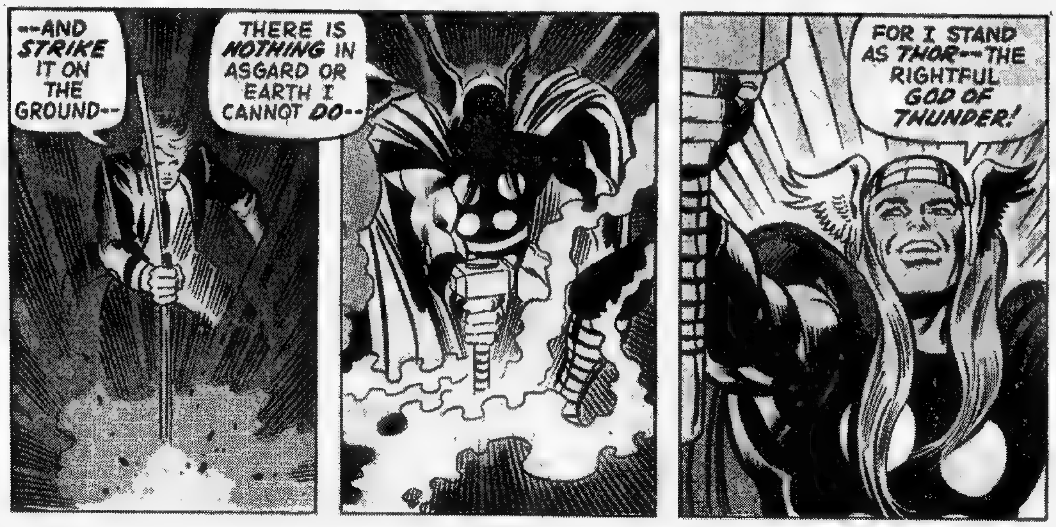
Next, you question the validity of our work on the Ray and Bulls Eye articles, all the time admitting you've never seen the art in question. You'd make a great protester. You're against it, so don't confuse you with the facts. The Ray featured the early work of Will Eisner, the fine craftsmanship of Lou Fine, and some of Reed Crandall's BEST work, which is still being swiped today by such people as Wally Wood, for example. Bulls Eye was one of the highpoints in the Western genre, second only, perhaps, to Kirby's BOYS' RANCH and Nick Cardy's BAT LASH. But I forget, you don't like Kirby. By the way Bruce, who are the "many people" who confuse Al Williamson's work at EC with his work today? I never have. I don't know of anyone who has, although many people do hold Al's EC work in high regard. What is your evaluation of Al's work as "very bad," but another meaningless value judgement, unsupported by evidence or facts.

On the basis of some plot summaries, you condemn the RAY and BULLS EYE as "terribly cliche," and in the same breath, denounce all comic plots today, including the new GL - GA series, which you describe as "a direct steal from easy rider." It may come as a surprise to you, in fact I'm sure it will, to know that the actual number of plots in the history of literature is very small. It is the variation of these plots which provide "originality." For example, there is only ONE plot for all murder mysteries, i.e., someone is killed for a particular motive or combination of motives. Just as all music as we know it comes from only a few notes, so does all literature spring from


THOUGH IN SPIRIT I AM DONALD BLAKE...
'TIS THOR THAT I HAVE EVER BEEN!
GOD OF THUNDER ...NOW, AND FORE'ER!!
SO BE IT!
20.

ABOVE: Three panels from Thor #159.....Art by Jack Kirby

BELOW: Three panels from Thor #181.....Art by Neal Adams


--AND STRIKE IT ON THE GROUND--
THERE IS NOTHING IN ASGARD OR EARTH I CANNOT DO--
FOR I STAND AS THOR--THE RIGHTFUL GOD OF THUNDER!

© Marvel Comics Group...1970

a relatively small pool of plots. As a result, it is virtually impossible to summarize a plot without making it sound at least a bit cliched. For example: Babbit: A moor is tricked into believing his wife is an adultress, and kills her supposed lover, his good friend. Paradise Lost: God kicks Adam and Eve out of Eden. Macbeth: Ambition drives Macbeth to kill King Duncan. Don't sound too great, do they. I don't really care for the new GL - GA, but the idea of roaming around the countryside "in search of America" has been around much longer than Easy Rider or for that matter, Peter Fonda. A recent example of the same type theme: Route 66, the popular television show.

Well, so much for your small errors. Now on to your main misconceptions, and your first one is a stunner. "Isn't style being mistaken for inability??" you ask. "When someone tells me that an artist has 'style', I'm naturally assuming that he is able to draw realistically and is merely extending his talent. (Whatever that's supposed to mean--B.C.)". Now it might not be so bad if art had begun with comic books, and if all these years we fans had been laboring under the delusion that style was something other than lack of talent until you chanced along and showed us the light, but such is not the case; "Style" is a term found in art criticism since the year 1. If, as you suggest, "good" art was "realistic" art, then the best artists would be sort of super-realists, exact imitaters of nature. In point of fact, the best "art" would be indistinguishable from a color photograph. But even BEFORE the camera, people were defining art, its purposes and goals, in much broader, much different terms. Rembrandt, for example, broke precedent with realism in his famous "Night Watch" painting. In the age of Dryden, the big debate was in both art and literature, the conflict between the "general" and the "particular." Should a portrait be a perfect likeness, or just perfect? Then came the impressionists, the pointilists, the Cezannes, the Matisses, the cubists, the non-objective painters, the ash-can schools, and so many more. The functions of art have been many, but it has rarely served the role of a third-rate camera.

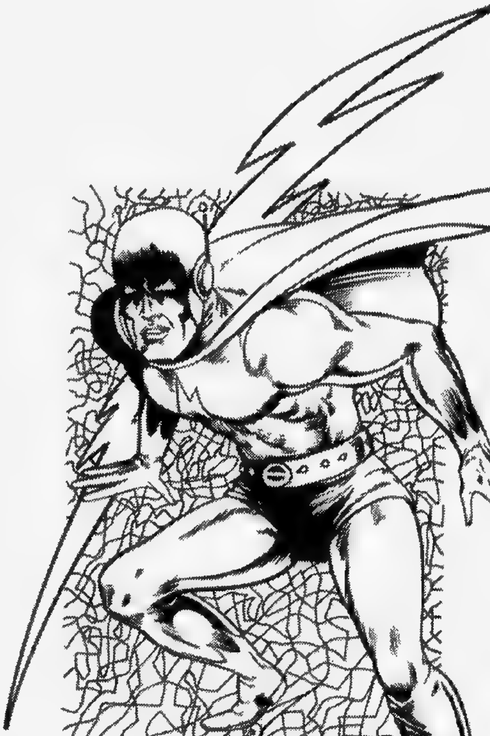
Now let's take a look at the "realistic" Neal Adams, whom you seem to so much admire. Notice the high, protruding cheek bones on all of Neal's male characters. In real life, everyone doesn't have Neal Adams-style cheek bones. And isn't it interesting how most of his characters run the same way, and have the same hand gestures. That doesn't happen in real life either. And how about those bulging muscles, especially noticeable on all his costumed characters. Do you think people in costume would really look like that? Of course not, look at Adam West or George Reeves. Have you no condemnation for the psychedelic effects Adams often employs? Look at any Adams character, and you'll see a black line going all around him. When was the last time you saw a person surrounded by a black line walking down the street. Notice the forced perspectives Neal often employs. Reminds one of--of--Kirby, wouldn't you say? Like virtually every other artist in the business, Neal probably admires and respects Kirby. Certainly he had no major quarrel with Kirby's Thor, and drew on Jack's work for his own Thor art. (See preceding page) All of it amounts to one thing, Bruce: STYLE!

It all adds up to one thing: the "realistic" quality of any artists work has no bearing whatsoever on his abilities as an artist. You put down Steve Ditko. Here is a man who is an absolute master of the art of story telling. Story telling is the most important aspect of comics, an aspect you seem virtually unaware of. Here is a man who, in his Dr. Strange and Creepy work, created an atmosphere of supernatural horror that was totally believable, totally different, totally true. Here is a man who in his work on Mr. A and The Question, brought back to comics the social comment we are now seeing in Green Lantern and other magazines, even though the content of that comment differs from book to book.

But then, as if putting Ditko down wasn't silly enough, you knock Jack Kirby, practically accusing him of being unable to draw. Jack Kirby is the absolute father of comic books as we know them. He perfected the superhero to its greatest height; during his tenure at Marvel, the entire industry did little except FOLLOW where Kirby led. An experimenter with the figure, with foreshortening, with movement, with storytelling, with design, Kirby is possibly the greatest artist in ANY field, alive today. Not only is he a master of the super hero, but he is a pastmaster of just about anything else you care to name. He did some of the top westerns, already mentioned. In BLACK MAGIC, he often surpassed EC in quality of art and story. He led in bringing the science fiction elements into comics, as well as the classical mythological ones. He's done 3-D books. His crime stories remain unsurpassed in the field, and he CREATED the Romance comic book, of all things, and did some of the most beautiful work for them that comics have ever known. To say that you don't care for Kirby's work is one thing; to say that he can't draw displays an ignorance of Kirby, comics, and art in general, that is appalling. And yet, you have the absolute nerve to say that Kirby would never be accepted anywhere outside of comics. Kirby has worked, among other things, for such magazines as Esquire. He could leave comics in a minute, should he so desire. Other artists who "can't draw" either, who only have a "style," are now employed in advertising, magazine illustrating, and other commercial art fields. The super-stylized Harvey Kurtzman works for Look and Playboy; Jack Davis is busy with movie posters and covers for TV Guide, as well as all kinds of commercial art assignments. Will Eisner is operating his own company. And the list goes on, endlessly.

The final, amusing stroke in your letter, Bruce, is the comment that you have now matured to such zines as Spa-Fon and Graphic Story Magazine. We have never attempted to compete with these zines, only to supplement them. They sell for a dollar, we sell for half that price. We try to provide variety, a variety that centers on factual articles and fan strips, with a smattering of pro art, letters, and interviews, as well as a con report now and then. Spa-Fon is an EC fanzine; Graphic Story Magazine, ironically, is devoted to the study of the comic medium. I say ironically, because while EC fans may be "pretty picture fans," you will not find any haters of stylized artists at GSM. Indeed, their preference is for stylized artists: Will Gould, Basil Wolverton, Carl Barks, Alex Toth, and yes, the master, Jack Kirby. They understand those aspects of the comic media which you don't even seem to realize exist. You seem to desire nothing but pretty pictures to look at. If this is what satisfies you, give up reading comic books, and start going to museums and buying picture post cards.

Sincerely,
BOB COSGROVE



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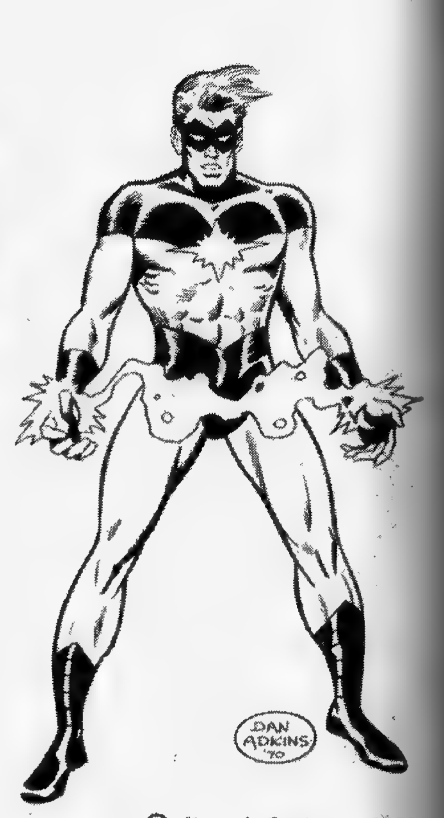
THEN SHAZAM IT WAS:......

ACBA

by: Martin L. Greim



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Like Billy Batson yelling Shazam and turning into Captain Marvel, the people of the comic book industry have yelled ACBA and turned themselves into the Academy of Comic Book Arts.

Throughout the convention the magic word was ACBA. It was news to almost every fan and everyone wanted to know more about the organization. ACBA came about so quickly, explained Phil Seuling at the opening of a panel on the organization, that fans were not yet aware of it. Officers had been elected, consisting of Stan Lee (President), Neal Adams (Vice-President), and an exeutive board with such members as - Gray Morrow, Denny O'Neil, Archie Goodwin, Roy Thomas and Dick Giordano, to name just a few.

Excitedly, Phil introduced the Vice-President of ACBA, Neal Adams, who would introduce the panel members and tell of the creation of ACBA.

Neal told how, for quite some time, the creative people of the comic book industry were dissatisfied. Dissatisfied with the way the industry was conducting itself. Dissatisfied with the pay scale. Dissatisfied that the industry neglected to do anything about its image.

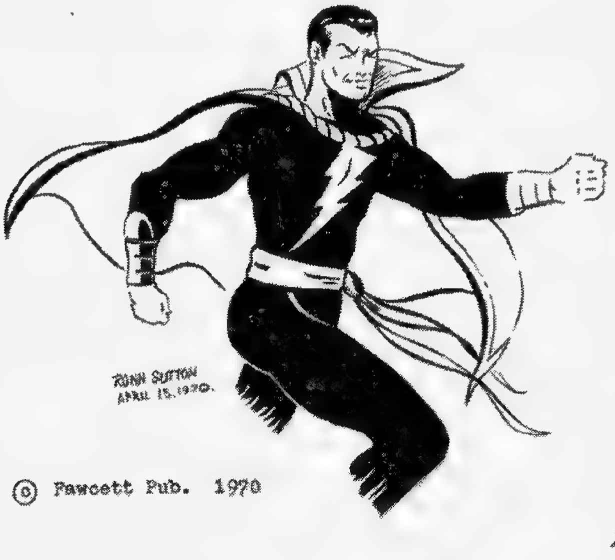
Because of this, Stan Lee and Carmine Infantino arranged a meeting with all the people in the comic book industry. They discussed problems and made plans to form an organization to promote the comic book industry to the publishers, to the fans and to the public. This was ACBA. Carmine Infantino felt he could not join, because he was creative head of National Periodicals. Stan Lee joined because he felt he, as an editor, was part of the business. The Academy hoped and felt that Carmine would join the organization in the future.

Neal went on to tell the fans that committees had been formed, some of which would inform fans of what ACBA was doing in hopes of gaining their support and perhaps even help it with an affiliate organization.

The first committee mentioned was the "talent pool", headed by Dick Giordano. This committee would inform the talents in the industry, both established and new, where work was available. Sort of a communications network. At this point, Dick Giordano took the floor to talk about and field questions about his committee. He told the fans he would be going around to all the comic companies finding out what type of work was needed by them. In this way, it would be like combining management and labor.

When asked if the "talent pool" would be for artists only, Giordano quickly replied, "Definitely not! It's for anyone interested in our industry...writers, letterers, colorists, anyone. We want to help people in our industry."

What ACBA planned to do in the future is to publish a newsletter and print it in the fanzines, letting the fans know who the ACBA officers are and where they can get in touch with the members of the "talent pool".



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The next committee talked about was the Public Relations Committee, headed by Stan Lee. Affiliated with this committee is a lecture bureau. Stan and the lecture bureau's job will be to get together people who are interested in talking about comics. Should a Con need a speaker, ACBA could be contacted and one would be provided. A list of guest lecturers will also be provided to colleges who might need a speaker on the comic book media. More radio, television and newspaper public relation features will be promoted. Promotion of comics on the stands will be a big feature of Public Relations. Distribution and placing of comics has always been a problem to the industry. The industry has been unable to solve it, so now ACBA will take a crack at it.

ACBA would like to be able to provide art exhibitions to Conventions and schools who request it. Also the sale of original art to make money for the industry and charitable organizations.

At this point Jim Warren, a late arriver and the talent who was instrumental in creating ACBA's constitution, asked to say a few words.

Jim compared the creation of ACBA to the early days of motion pictures and the creation of their independent companies. Warren was in hopes that someday ACBA would have prestige awards, televised like the motion picture Academy Awards. He preferred to call ACBA the Academy, as ACBA sounded, to him, like a skin disease. Warren praised men like Adams, Giordano and the founding fathers and believed that ACBA would be the prime moving force for good, in the changing of the comic industry. "ACBA has not approached the power structure yet," said Warren. "These are the publishers and distributors and money factions. We're not ready yet. However, by the fall, when we're ready, we will present ourselves to them in an attempt to save our industry."

If ACBA didn't do this, Warren felt, it would be one more nail in the coffin of comics.

Adams and Warren both related tales that illustrated how people who knew very little have been in charge of the comic book industry. "We're not interested in fighting with the publishers," said Adams. "We just want to show them the new directions in which they can go. That's what ACBA's all about."

ACBA will be having an art service. This will introduce artists who have had only comic book training to methods they wouldn't be familiar with; such as those used in advertising.

There will also be an awards committee, headed by Archie Goodwin. This committee will give awards to the deserving people in the industry and will be voted on by their fellows.

Whether ACBA will be the savior of the comic book industry remains to be seen. It's off to a good start. If ACBA is successful, next years Comic Conventions should prove very interesting.

CONVENTION LUNCH

BILL EVERETT

JOE KUBERT

by
MARTIN L. GREIM

1:10 p.m. and late as usual. Every year Bob, Gilie and I buy tickets to the convention Luncheon and every year we're late. I mentally cursed myself, as we ran along the hotel corridors toward the banquet room. This year, of all years, I didn't want to miss a word of the luncheon. Bill Everett was to be there! A fan of his, since I could read, I was really excited about hearing him speak. Then too, the other luncheon guest wasn't to be missed. Carmine Infantino had been slated for the spot, but because something had come up another comic great had taken his place...Joe Kubert.

These two comic book legends in the same room and we were going to be late!

We finally arrived at the ballroom and there friendly Bill Black waved us forward to a table. We were in luck, the luncheon was running late and we had a front table. Within minutes, after we were seated, the luncheon got underway. At the head table were seated comic greats - Gil Kane, Bill Everett, Joe Kubert, and Neal Adams. Phil Seuling stepped to the microphone and read a short speech sent by Carmine Infantino. Carmine apologized for not being there and told the fans that the 1970's would bring great things to the comic industry. He quoted Winston Churchill, saying in relation to comics, "This shall be our finest hour!"

After reading the speech, Phil brought out an award for Carmine, which Neal Adams accepted for him. Neal went on to tell the fans a bit about Carmine Infantino. He told how Carmine started a lot of the new and different things in comics, before anyone else did. He also told of how a lot of these new ideas were frowned upon by the men in charge. However, Carmine fought for these ideas and finally got them across. Now he's turned it over to men like Adams who hope to create new ideas and carry on in his tradition.

The next personality to speak was Gil Kane, who introduced Bill Everett. He told of how privileged he felt to introduce Bill and that Bill had been one of his original inspirations. Gil felt that Bill was much more than an artist; that in addition, he was an unparalleled story teller. It was here, Gil thought, Bill's greatest talent lay. Bill's work on Centaur Publication's golden age hero - A-Man, The Amazing Man was mentioned and how great the story telling was. "You could follow the action from panel to panel and because of the dynamics, the tension built up, and the continuity of motion, you didn't realize you were looking at single frame panels," said Kane.

Then there was Bill's work on Sub-Mariner; perhaps his greatest achievement. It was felt that Bill was at his peak of story telling in those days, with this character. Gil felt, like myself, that it's a shame Bill isn't doing work on Sub-Mariner today. He felt Bill was the best artist on the character and that he had the greatest feel for him. Bill gave Sub-Mariner a life and personality all his own, that he never had with any other artist.

At this point, Gil began conducting a question and answer period with Bill. The first question Gil asked was:

"What is your artistic background?"

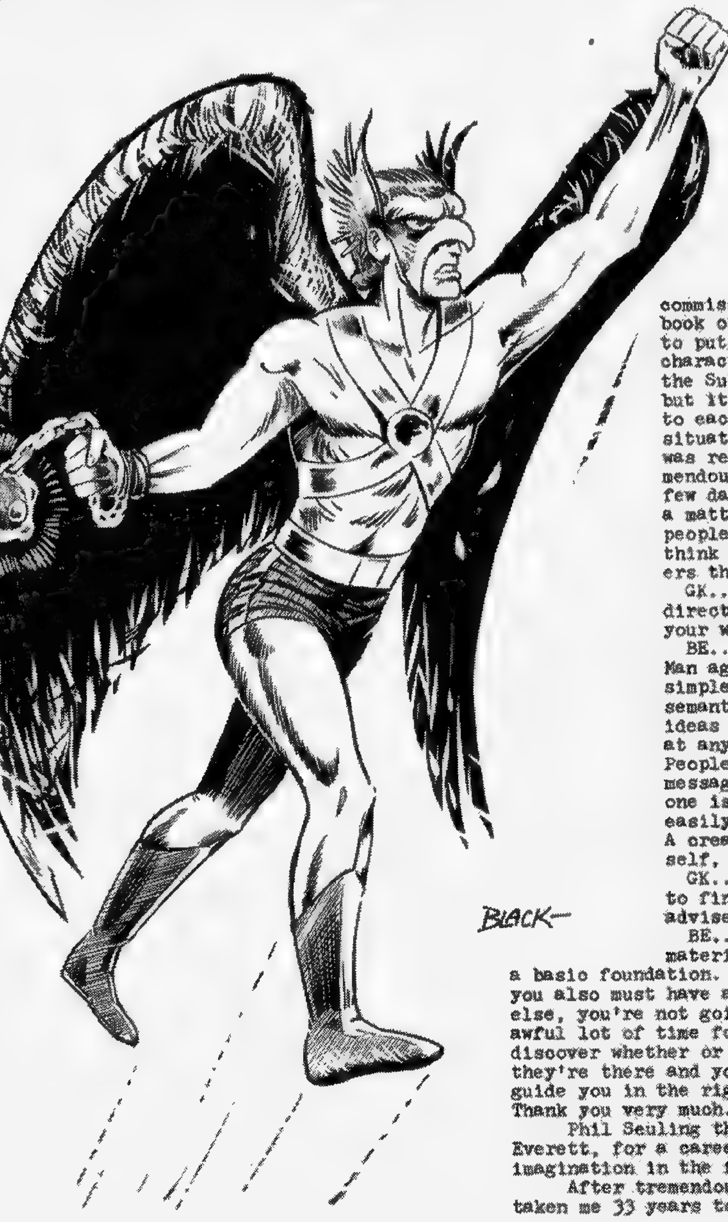
"First, I want to thank everybody here for the honor of sitting at this table," replied Bill. "Without you people, I don't think we'd be so much today and certainly not what we are. To answer Gil's question, my formal art training was never complete. I have to say I was born with the talent. I can take no credit for it. If I take any credit at all, it's just having been able to do so much with it. I've had a pencil in my hand almost all my life. I actually have only two years of art training. I didn't really have that, I was credited with three years of training because I went through three years in about a year and a half and this is only due to the inborn talent, and the drive that I had to get somewhere fast. That's about the size of my formal art training. I think that anything else was talent, and the desire to put something on paper."

GK..You always were the best writer, I thought, for the Sub-Mariner. What shaped your attitudes for story lines?

BE.."This is a tough one, because I came into the comics almost by accident. I was desperate. I had done some writing, but as far as my inspiration is concerned, I don't know that I really had any. I was sort of led into cartooning by my father's wish. He always wanted me to be a cartoonist and he died, unfortunately, before he saw that come true. But that was probably in back of the whole thing. As far as story telling is concerned, I read a great deal when I was very young. I read what was then considered the deeper novels, the high class literature. I didn't go much for pulp material, I didn't even read the daily comics. My background as far as education - I dropped out of high school and art school. I had to make up for this in reading. I wanted to be a writer and if I had any idol at all it would be Jack London. I liked the way he told a story, and I figured that rather than probably be the great novelist of all time, I would attempt merely to tell the story in the simplest terms that I could summon, that I could utilize. I think that this shows up in the early writings that Gil mentioned. I'm only recently beginning to learn that there was more to my writing the Sub-Mariner than I actually thought of at the time. He was an angry character. He was probably expressing some of my own personality, but again the origin of the Sub-Mariner, I was allowed full expression. There were no limitations set by editors or publishers, or anyone. This was a case where the artist writing could freely express himself and if he had something to tell, this was an outlet for it. Fortunately business was very good at the time and a great many of us didn't realize what we were venturing into, or we would have done more work, if we'd had the forsight."

GK..In the early days, comics were not produced by the publishers themselves, but by special comic book agencies. Every newspaper syndicate had their own comic books and the publishers who didn't have their own material, had to buy newspaper strip reprints. At that time, you, Carl Burgos, and several other artists, formed an organization called Funnies, Inc., which was one of the early agencies. Through Funnies, Inc., a lot of the characters such as Sub-Mariner, Human Torch etc., were created. Please tell us about how the agencies worked, how they got together, how this particular agency got together and what was the role of Jack Kay?

BE.."To begin with, I had been with Centaur Publications and Jack Kay was their editor, or managing editor and he felt the need to break loose in the form of his own company of some sort. So, a few of us banded together with Jack Kay. Carl Burgos, Paul Gustafson, Ben Thompson, a few others were in on forming our own informal art service, to supply a package deal to the publisher. In other words, we would write the story, do the complete artwork, as part of a 32-page or 48-page book. We started very, very small, but rapidly built. One of our first customers was Martin Goodman who founded what was then called Timely Comics. However, agencies didn't last. It didn't work because we were the middle men; which meant the publisher had to pay extra for what he wanted. He soon discovered this and when he did the agencies as such were eliminated."



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GK..Please tell about some of the people who worked with you, and how did you develop the feud between the Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch?

BE..It's a long story, that would take about an hour to describe in detail. Actually the idea of combining two major characters into one story wasn't original. How it came about, I don't remember actually. We were faced with a commission to produce a semi-quarterly annual book of 64 pages. The biggest question was what to put in this book. Going through the various characters, the only two that made any sense were the Sub-Mariner and Human Torch. It sounds simple but it wasn't -- how to introduce the characters to each other -- how to get them involved in a situation which would create a historical "Battle" was really an intricate problem. It was a tremendous amount of work that was accomplished in a few days. In fact, the whole book was produced in a matter of about five days, but it took a lot of people to do it. The book was successful, and I think it was because of the nature of the characters themselves."

GK..If you could do anything you wanted, which direction would you go, and how would you approach your work?

BE.."I would love to see something like Amazing Man again. I would like to see it done in a simple style, instead of going into all kinds of semantics. I would reinstate some of the original ideas and try to create the writing so that anyone, at any level of intelligence, could enjoy it. People are entertained whether or not they get the message, and I think the best way to entertain someone is to put it in a way that he can readily and easily understand without becoming too complicated. A creative person should be allowed to express himself, but in a way that everyone can understand.

GK..If you were to advise budding artists who want to find "the secret of cartooning" what would you advise?

BE..If you have the talent, read as much of the material that's being produced today, so you have a basic foundation. Then, if you still have the desire to do it, you also must have a desire to work hard. It's like anything else, you're not going to make the door open unless you work an awful lot of time for very little money to begin with. First discover whether or not you have the talent, the desire, and if they're there and you're willing to work, then find someone to guide you in the right direction and just work like heck at it. Thank you very much."

Phil Seuling then gave Bill an award that said: "To Bill Everett, for a career-long dedication to superior quality and imagination in the field of comic art."

After tremendous applause, Bill thanked Phil and said, "It's taken me 33 years to get this and I'm awfully, awfully grateful.

Now Joe Kubert was introduced. Neal Adams stepped forward to give a few personal experiences he's had in association with Joe. He stated that it sort of shook him up to learn Joe started in comics at age 12½ and had his first feature at 14. It was Kubert's Tor strip that made Neal a dedicated Kubert fan. Neal was an army brat and on his way home from Germany with his father, whose tour of duty was up. They stopped in Ireland, where Neal picked up a 3-D copy of Tor. It blew his mind! He didn't even remember the rest of the trip home. Neal went on to say, "Joe is one of the nicest guys in the world. He's nice to the point of my ability to understand it. This field doesn't deserve such people, but there are a lot of nice people like that".

Joe payed Neal the greatest compliment he felt he'd ever get. After Neal had handed in an Enemy Ace story, Joe told him it was though somebody had crawled into his mind. Neal said he was walking on air for a week.

The questioning began with Neal asking how Tor came about, how it developed, and what happened to it.

Kubert replied, "Tor was an idea that came to mind, kind of patterned after the Tarzan strip. I felt the formula was a good one. I was in the army at the time, heading home and I made some preliminary sketches of a character I felt might be applicable to the things that were happening at that time today--morality, etc, and could be put down to a basic mileu of the stone age type strip. I've gotten many letters saying that man did not exist in the age of the dinosaur etc., but, no one can prove to me with certainty man did not exist on earth during the dying-out time of the dinosaur. That's my cop-out, anyhow.

NA..Just as Tor seems to have a sort of morality, when Joe took over war books, they became real stories of what war seemed to be about. Bob Kaniger had a lot to do with this, please tell us a bit about your association with Bob Kaniger.

JK..I think about 95% of the direction and motivation of the stories, where they took on some sort of anti-war tinge, was really Bob Kaniger's doing. He was the editor of most of the material I had done. Within the last 2 or 3 years the tinge you see in most of the war magazines reflects my own personal feelings, but in the beginning any feelings in the war comics, rather than bang-bang, were Bob Kaniger's doing and any kudos should come to him."

Joe went on to relate how at age 13 he and friend Norman Moore used to drop in on any one of 25 different comic publishers. One of them they'd see religiously was Lloyd Jack Kay. "We never got as far as Bill at that time,"said Joe. "We couldn't get in to see the hoi-polloy. Our experience was that no matter how busy any pro was, no matter how pressing a deadline, he'd take all kinds of time out to sit and talk to you. In this field there are the nicest bunch of guys I've ever met."

NA..What do you think, as an editor, about the 1971-72 comics?

JK.."As Neal has said, I've been lucky. I've written, edited, colored, published, drawn for, lettered, etc. All the editors that work for Carmine are lucky, in that they get almost carte blanche to do what they wish, as long as it is feasible. I find now, that I can do almost anything I want to in the strips nowadays. No matter how good, or beautiful, or nice a thing might be, if it doesn't sell then it's down and out. So we are controlled by that, but outside of that particular point, I think at National anyhow, I find I have as much freedom as I like. I like to bridge that freedom to anybody working with me and allow him the freedom to do anything he'd like to do. In the 70's, I think comics are going to take a turn for the better. I think Carmine has done a yeoman service in trying to pull up National specifically and the business in general, to a point where it's going to reflect a lot of originality that for a long time has not been seen in comics. It's going to extend itself into areas where the comic book as we know it now, the small size, will be extended and stretched and perhaps reduced in different sorts of directions. What is going to happen is, we're going to find ourselves doing illustrations more than comic books. Text type material. The type of things reminiscent of the pulps from years gone by. There will be a tremendous demand for new talent that's comicn in. I see a great future ahead for this business."

To a round of applause, Phil Seuling presented an award to Joe. It said: "To Joe Kubert, for the cinematic story-telling techniques and the exciting and dramatic style of his work in the field of comic art".

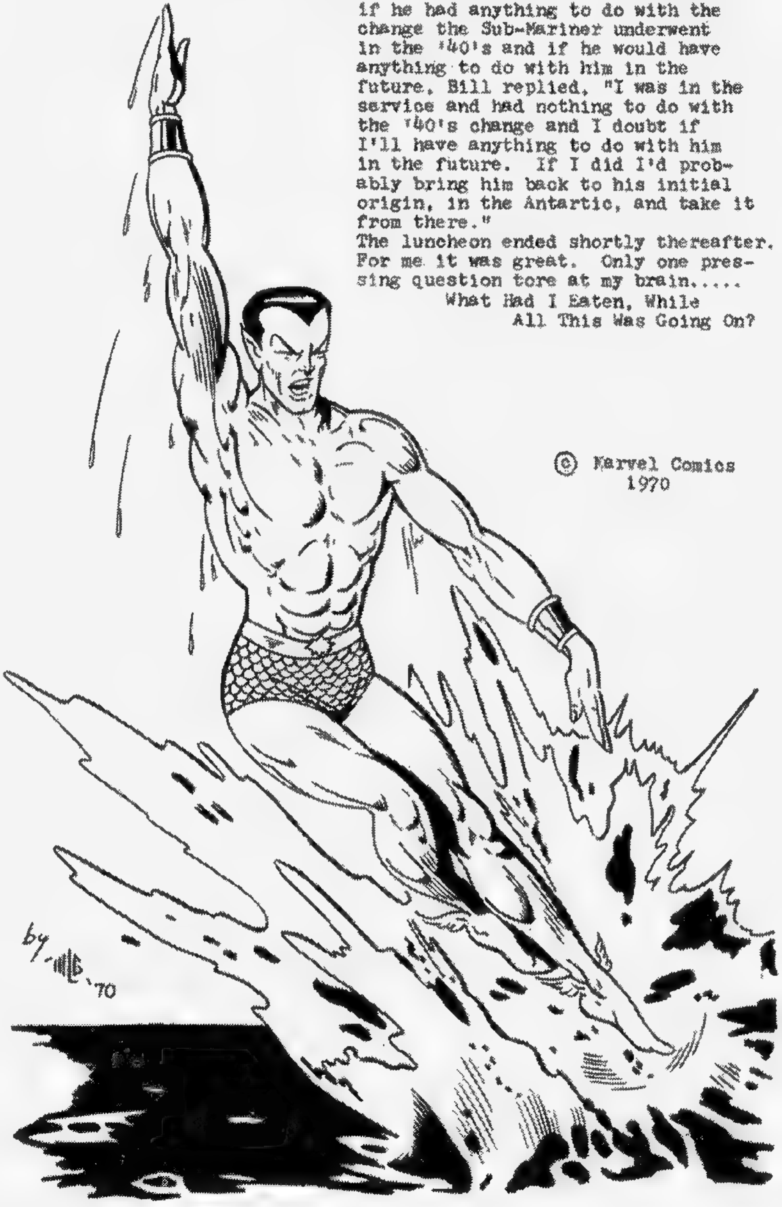
The fans were now permitted to question the luncheon guests. "Is the comics code more lenient to DC than Marvel?", asked one fan. Joe Kubert replied, "No, but I feel both companies are trying to see how much further they can go than they've gone in the past. Also, most of us feel, the code restrictions are not applicable to what's happening all around us today." Kubert went on to talk about how National was trying to utilize the comic book in the field of education. Apparently the picture word combination is a meaningful thing to a child who can not verbalize to any great extent. When asked what things influenced Joe in his work, he replied, "I've been influenced by every darn thing around me. The original King Kong movie drove me up a wall. Hal Foster's Tarzan was as exciting as reading Kipling's jungle books. What I do is a combination of everything I've gathered from everyplace.

Bill Everett was next to come under the fans queries. Bill was asked why all but a few of his heroes were water based. "I suppose," said Bill, "because I've always liked the water. If anything started it, I got interested in Admiral Byrd's expedition to the South Pole and I read a lot about that. The more I read, the more intrigued I became, so when the opportunity came to create a character I naturally thought of water. Jack London's adventures at sea were influential too. I used to read a lot of sea stories."

Bill went on to mention his early childhood in Arizona and Montana. This gave him the background for his western character Bulls-eye Bill. Bill also talked about the name Sub-Mariner. One of his favorite poems was Colerige's "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner". This gave him the mariner part of Namor's name. The sub part came about from reading the writings of the Antartic. They talked about the "sub-polar zones". When asked if he had anything to do with the change the Sub-Mariner underwent in the '40's and if he would have anything to do with him in the future, Bill replied, "I was in the service and had nothing to do with the '40's change and I doubt if I'll have anything to do with him in the future. If I did I'd probably bring him back to his initial origin, in the Antartic, and take it from there."

The luncheon ended shortly thereafter. For me it was great. Only one pressing question tore at my brain.....

What Had I Eaten, While
All This Was Going On?



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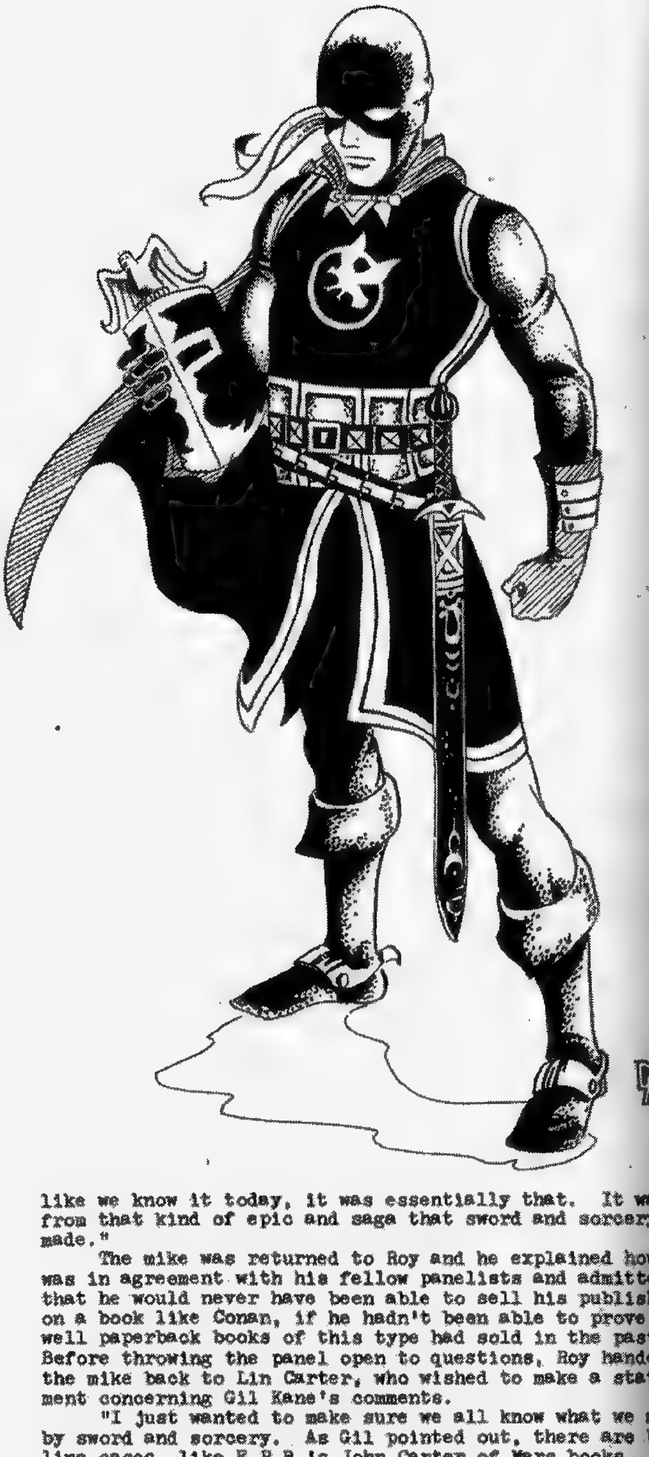
A BIT OF...

SWORD & SORCERY

Article by: Martin L. Greim

Art by: Dennis Fujitake & Richard Corben



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It was late Sunday afternoon and the last panel of the Convention was beginning to form. Roy Thomas walked to the speaker's platform and took his place as moderator. It was to be a panel on the newest subject to hit comics...... Sword & Sorcery. On each side of Roy sat a knowledgeable pro on the subject. Taking microphone in hand, Roy began to introduce them.

"The topic of this panel will be sword and sorcery and its role in comics of the past, present and of course particularly the future. In order to get the ball rolling, I thought, after introducing the gentlemen up here with me, I'd ask them each one question on which they could make a very brief comment and then we'll let you fans ask the questions. Starting from my left, is Mr. Lin Carter, who is the co-author of a number of the pulp Conan stories. Then we have the man who scripted one of the first sword and sorcery comics a couple of years ago, Denny O'Neil. On my right is the artist who worked on two of those stories, Mr. Berni Wrightson. There have been an awful lot of paperback book covers relating to sword and sorcery on the stands, and quite a few of them were by Mr. Jeff Jones. Some of the first and finest sword and sorcery stories done in comics, were pencilled by a man who takes quite an interest in the artistic end and writing of comics, Mr. Gil Kane. And I'm Roy Thomas. I'd like to keep the questions, to this panel, related primarilly to sword and sorcery, in relation to comics. The question I thought I might start off by asking is...'What part do you think sword and sorcery will and should and even can play in comics of the future'?"

(Lin Carter) "Well, I suppose that depends on how well your Conan book does. If it sells good, I think it will be imitated and there will be a lot more sword and sorcery. And if it flops, it will probably kill sword and sorcery for years to come. I think it's up to you."

(Denny O'Neil) "I'm surprised sword and sorcery hasn't been more popular in comics 'till now. It's a very visual type of story telling. It has magic, action and adventure, but it's just always bombed. I hope it becomes popular. Stories of this type are a lot of fun to do and I hope we have requests to do more."

(Berni Wrightson) "I imagine it will have to be tried, to see what's going to work. As Denny said, its been tried in the past and didn't always come off. I don't think the two have ever really been combined efectively. There's been a lot of sword and a lot of sorcery things, but its always been one or the other. Conan is probably the first sword and sorcery thing in the classic tradition. I guess we'll just have to wait on that."

(Jeff Jones) "I think that the main problem that will have to be overcome, before it will sell in comics, is the angle of violence. Because sword and sorcery has to have sorcery and violence, I imagine, in comics, the sorcery will have to be played up more than thw sword angle. I think that this might limit the action too much, unless it is overcome, in some way, by good writing."

(Gil Kane) "I think sword and sorcery, like most of the other things that appear in comics, is highly innovative. Sword and sorcery has always been popular in the pulps. In fact, in the '40's a publishing outfit named "Fiction House" turned out a magazine called Planet Comics, that even though they didn't turn out sword and sorcery, like we know it today, it was essentially that. It was from that kind of epic and saga that sword and sorcery is made."

The mike was returned to Roy and he explained how he was in agreement with his fellow panelists and admitted that he would never have been able to sell his publisher on a book like Conan, if he hadn't been able to prove how well paperback books of this type had sold in the past. Before throwing the panel open to questions, Roy handed the mike back to Lin Carter, who wished to make a statement concerning Gil Kane's comments.

"I just wanted to make sure we all know what we mean by sword and sorcery. As Gil pointed out, there are borderline cases, like E.R.B.'s John Carter of Mars books. There's a lot of sword, but no sorcery and the comic's super heroes often have a lot of sorcery, but no appreciable sword. What sword and sorcery is, to be very precise, is...It's an action story, derived from the pulp magazine tradition of headlong pace and naritive; which pits an indomitable warrior hero in direct confrontation with forces, not of evil, but of supernatural evil. Which is to say...gods and ghosts and deamons, dragons, magicians and things like that. It was Robert E. Howard who actually pinned down this type of fiction. He combined all the elements of a heroic adventure story, with the fantasy story and the wierd tales."

Lin explained why Howard injected the wierd and horror element into his stories. Howard was trying to sell sword and sorcery to "Wierd Tales Magazine", but they were reluctant to buy it, because it was straight adventure. They bounced most of his early "King Kull" (predicessor of Conan) stories, because they lacked horror. Howard took the stories back and created Conan. In Conan, Howard combined the horror of H.P.Lovecraft with a warrior hero.

After Lin's excellent definition of sword and sorcery, Roy Thomas opened the question and answer period.

The first question asked how Roy was going to handle the Conan book? Whether or not he was going to follow the Conan adventures in chronological order. Roy prefaced his answer, with the statement he was not really pleased with the first issue. He felt, where Barry Smith was so far away in England, that the story lacked. He and Barry had extensive phone conversations and had corresponded on Conan, but this was no substitute for actually sitting down and planning the issue. Getting into the actual question, Roy stated the Conan book would follow, as closely as possible, the chronological order of the novels. By the 4th issue, there will be an actual adaptation of the first Robert E. Howard chronological story, "The Tower of the Elephant".

"How did Nightmaster do?", was the next question asked. Denny O'Neil answered, "Poorly! It's not on sale anymore!" Denny had to write 6 stories for the character originally, but half way through the second story, he was told to end it with the third story. If it was a "raving success" the stories would go on from there. It was not a raving success!

How would sword and sorcery fare under the Comics Code? Roy Thomas felt you could, for the most part, work around it. In Conan, most of the violence, such as stabbing, would be shown off panel. Lin Carter felt that the headlong violence could be toned down, by injecting elements of suspense, chase and cliff hanging. As for the unclad women, in the Conan stories, Lin felt they would be clad a bit. The thing that had always intrigued Lin, when reading Conan, was that at the end of many of the stories, Conan would ride off with some nude girl across his saddle, but he would always appear alone at the start of his next adventure. Lin often wondered what became of those girls and thought Roy could interject this into his Conan stories. Roy admitted there were some "intriguing" possibilities there.

Denny O'Neil too thought you could get around the Comics Code. He told of how, in Nightmaster, he wanted to do a thing with zombies, but the code objected. To get around this, he used instead, characters called "ackies". Suits of armor inhabited by spirits of dead warriors. They were still zombies, but they were called something else.

Roy was asked if the Comics Code was the same now, as it was when it first came about. He answered yes, but the interpretation is more liberal.

When asked what the chances were of Wally Wood inking Conan, Roy replied, "Very slight!" He'd love to see it happen, but where Wally was editing a new book for Warren Publications, Roy wasn't even sure Wally could continue his Dr. Doom series.

Roy then mentioned an upcoming "King Kull" story that will appear in one of Marvel's horror magazines, being inked by Berni Wrightson. Originally a 9 page story, it had been adapted to a 7 page strip. Its title - "The Skull of Silence!" Roy felt that if Conan was a success, fans would be seeing a lot more sword and sorcery from both Marvel and National.

Gil Kane was asked how the sword and sorcery stories that he had done for House of Mystery had fared? Gil explained that the only way he could tell the success of a book was by the mail. National never provides figures to its artists. The stories seemed to have gotten a rather nice response.

Why did Berni Wrightson do two Nightmaster stories, rather than all three? Berni's first attempt was a bomb! The book was late, so rather than have Berni take the story back and correct it, they set it aside and gave it to Jerry Grandenetti with the condition that Berni would get to do the next two stories.

Roy, in writing Conan, refused to use word balloons and sound effects. This brought a round of applause from the fans. "Even Prince Valiant would have been more popular, if it had word balloons," said Roy.

Did Jeff Jones have any plans to do any sword and sorcery for either Marvel or National? No plans, at the moment, to do work at Marvel. However, he was doing a non sword and sorcery story for National.

How does an artist approach a sword and sorcery strip? Does he try for pomp or grace?

Gil Kane answered that a combination of stress and power and grace and balance was best from his point of view.

Berni Wrightson then told of his approach to the King Kull story he'd done for Marvel. In this story Kull fights the embodyment of silence. Berni turned the silence into tentacles of light that kept getting stronger, as the silence escapes from its prison. It's an effect like washing the color out of a page.

Roy was asked if any of the Marvel heroes would be guest starring with Conan?

Roy explained he'd rather keep Conan just in his own book. If a cross over had to be made, perhaps it would be with King Kull.

The final question of the afternoon, was directed at Lin Carter. Lin was asked if he would be, as executor of Howard's estate, consulting with Roy on the Conan books?

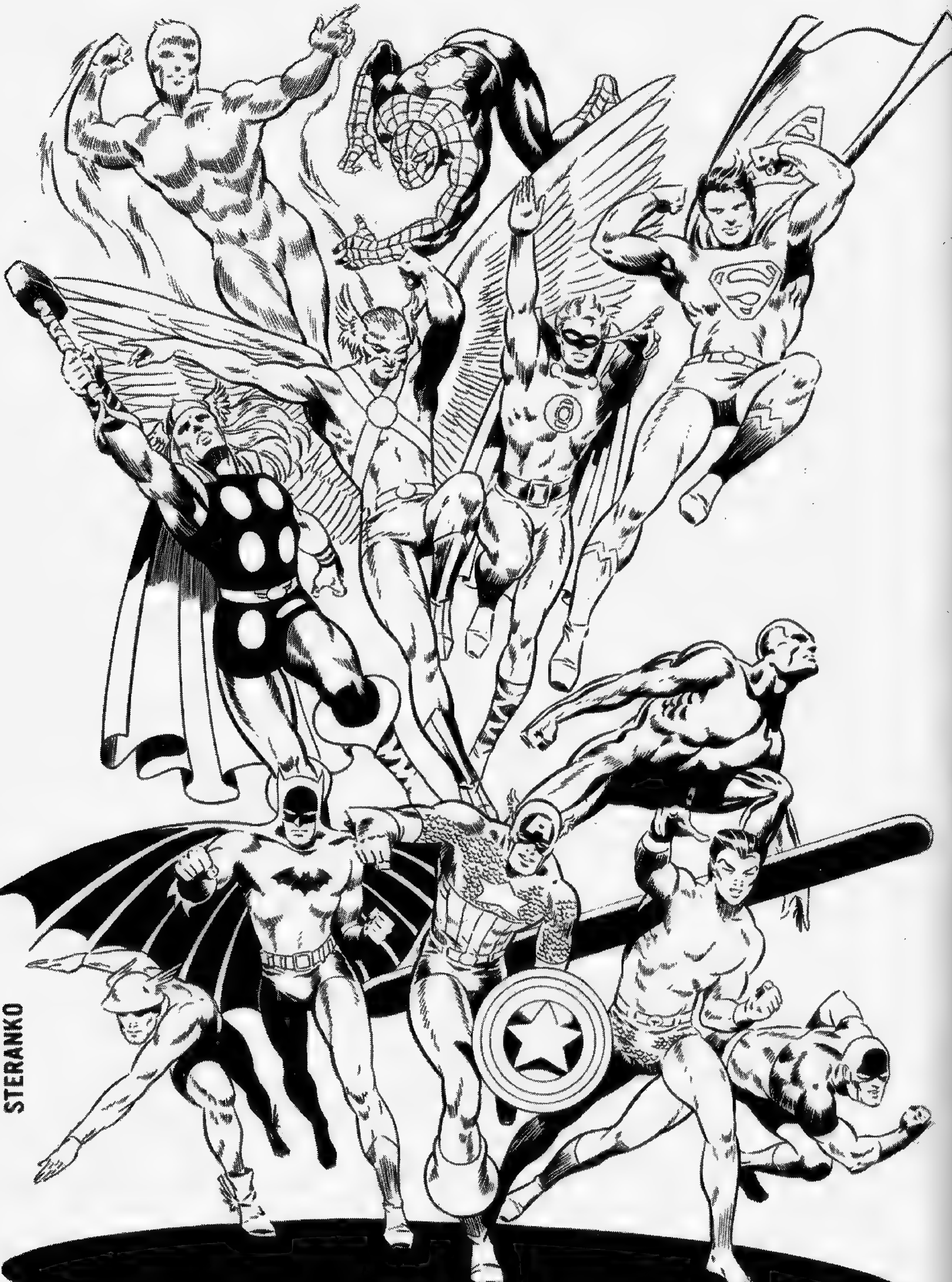
Before he could answer, Roy broke in and explained how Lin was a tremendously busy writer and that he had little free time. Lin then gave a big smile and said, "I'll do it for nothing!" The crowd applauded wildly.

Roy had the final word----"The price is right!"

A light hearted end for a very interesting panel.

This panel marked our last hour at the 1970 Comic Art Convention. Within a few minutes, Bob, Ellie and I said our goodbyes and after a quick supper with Bill Black, hurried to catch the train home.

I've said it before, but I'll say it again, "There is nothing like a comic convention!" There is a certain fun feeling that one gets, that you can't get at any other type of con. I'm most certainly looking forward to next year, when Phil Seuling once again says, "It's Con Time!"



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A REVIEW:

STERANKO's
HISTORY OF THE COMICS

by: COSGROVE & GREIM

Jim Steranko's History of Comics is the most important historical contribution to the history of the comic book industry to date. For too, too long our field has been historically neglected, chronicled only in the pages of dittoed, limited print-run fanzines. This is not to say that attempts at writing histories haven't been made--there have been several foreign books that have attempted to cover the history of comic art, generally trying to include every country, and every contribution from the Bayou tapestry to Andy Warhol; in such tomes, comic books have generally enjoyed, at best, a cramped chapter discussing Superman, The Spirit, and the Marvel Age of Comics. The Fieffer book, was interesting, of course, but it was mainly a collection of personal memories of the industries early years, not a history. Now Steranko has changed this, and judging only the first volume of a four-volume set, it may be a long time before anyone tops him.

It is interesting to note, that even in writing, Steranko is influenced by motion pictures. Each chapter, of History of the Comics, is cleverly set up to relate to the movies. "Coming Attractions", "The Super Star", "Super Double Feature", "Best Supporting Characters", and "The Kid Players" are just a few of the titles that relate the comics to the movies. It is intriguing subtly like this, that makes Steranko's History of the Comics far above anything yet written on the topic.

The History has several basic strengths, one of which is the quality of Steranko's historical approach. He opens the book with a chapter on newspaper strips, aptly entitled "Coming Attractions". At this point, the reviewer is obliged to take issue with some rather short sighted criticism that this chapter has met with, in certain quarters of fandom. As the title indicates, Steranko is NOT concerned with giving a history of newspaper strips. That is a topic for a seperate book in itself; rather, he is attempting to give his reader some insight into those comic strips which were a major, direct influence, on many comic book strips and artists. Thus, it is foolish to criticize this chapter because Steranko failed to devote papagraphs and paragraphs to--say--The Yellow Kid or Buster Brown; for in spite of their historical importance, they were never a direct influence on the comic books. Rather, this chapter provides a base; a base which Steranko expands upon in an excellent chapter on the pulps, which is the high point in the book. Never before has any comic book historian attempted to chronicle the key influence the pulps had in the creation of the infant comic book. Steranko does it, and he does it well.

These same, key historic insights are carried over into the next chapter in the book, "The Super Star," dealing with the creation of Superman. Not only does it discuss the creation of Superman himself, but it, and subsequent chapters, spell out the story of how the early companies were formed, and who the men involved were. Again, this is something that no one has ever done completely, prior to Steranko. This chapter is a treasure trove of new information: M.C. Gaines role in selling the Superman strip (originally done for newspaper syndication) to National, anecdotal and biographical information on Siegel and Shuster, and valuable unpublished originals, such as Shuster's first drawing of Superman, and four pages from an unpublished Superman story, circa 1939, which relates the original origin of kryptonite. If Steranko's writing occasionally gets bogged down in facts, he is also capable of waxing philosophical.....In the closing of the chapter, he remarks, "If he has weakened, we must remember that like the legendary Atlas, Superman bears the weight of the whole world upon his shoulders. If he has been momentarily eclipsed by the scintilla of stylistic trends, we must understand his position is one of stability, not of change. And if he has grown weary, we must embrace him for the ten thousand and one battles he has fought, outselling all his imitators put together, for his is a timeless triumph and from his life stream all hero strips flow."

Another strength of the book, is Steranko's quiet appreciation of Jack Kirby. The book's introduction reads..."Dedicated to Jack Kirby, without whom there may not have been any comics to write a history about." This is a true statement, but so few, so very, very, few fans realize it. Steranko is dignified in discribing Kirby's contributions--he does not descend to embarassing hero-worship; but he does make clear that in many respects, the history of comic books is the history of Jack Kirby, and in fact, it is.

All this is not to imply that the book is without flaws--it is simply to state, that they are comparatively insignificant. In some cases, in fact, we've noticed that seeming errors of fact or judgement in Steranko's part are actually tributes to the ignorance of some of his reviewers. Few people really knew, for example, that Mort Weisinger was in fact editor of the Superman book ever since the mid-forties, with Whitney Ellsworth occupying a position roughly analagous to that of Carmine Infantino today. They just assume Steranko erred, and wrote their reviews accordingly. The large, awkward Life Magazine size seems a senseless format for what is largely a text volume, until one stops to consider that without it, the beautiful unpublished Meskin, Kirby, Everett, and Kubert work would have had to undergo much greater reduction. Real errors exist though, for those who stop to search. Bill Finger, as Tom Fagan points out, was NOT born in New York, but rather, in Denver, Colorado. The cover is not one of Steranko's best. One might wish that there were fewer covers and more interior illustrations taken from the comic books, and a bit more open, white space might have helped a layout that sometimes tends to get cramped. One might question the note of thanks at the end of volume I, since when the second volume comes out, the "Afterword" will, in effect, be smack dab in the middle of the book.

But all this constitutes not even a minor annoyance, for this volume has been written by the best possible type of author--the professional who is also a fan. The professional, because he understands the medium so well--the fan, because he loves it so well. Steranko is both. He has researched the book well, conducting extensive interviews with many pros, poreing thru his own vast library of comics, and drawing on those of other fans. Often, his debt to such fanzines as Voice of Comicdom, Tint, Champion and Comic Crusader is evident--for Steranko reads fanzines, just as he reads comics. It is obvious that this book was and is a labor of love. We recommend it, wholeheartedly.

There will, as stated before, be a second, third, and fourth volume of History of the Comics. Volume two will contain chapters covering Blackhawk, Plastic Man, and the entire Quality group, Captain Marvel and the Fawcett line (a hero some reviewers claimed Steranko had forgotten) Will Eisner's fabulous Spirit series, the miscellaneous golden age heroes like Airboy, The Heap, Stuntman, Blue Bolt, Black Cat, Daredevil, Catman, The Black Terror, Hangman, The Shield, Skyman, Sheena, Black Owl, and hundreds of others from Atoman to the Zebra.

Additional chapters will showcase the E.C. era, the western, romance, space and horror comics of the '50's, the heroes of that decade and the great comic renaissance of the '60's. A completely new cover will bind each new volume, making each a companion to the first. The price will be $3.00. All that ordered Book One will be notified when each volume becomes available. Jim welcomes comments about The History of the Comics. If you haven't ordered Volume One yet (cost $3.00) or you wish to comment to Jim on it--Write:

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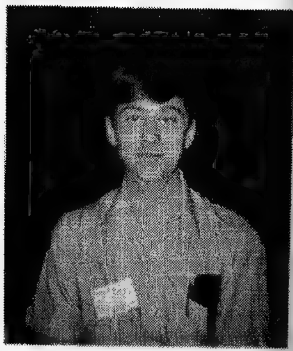

(GARY GROTH)

"AND I DID"

by: Martin L. Greim

It had been a little over a month since Bob, Ellie and I had returned exhausted from the New York Comic Art Convention. For me, as a rule, one Con a year is enough. However, the kind invitations from both Gary Groth (Convention Chairman) and John Fantucchio (long time friend) persuaded me to go. Ellie and I had originally planned to fly to the Washington, D.C. area, however, when Jim Steranko called and suggested we drop by, I decided to drive. It proved to be an interesting trip and I got to spend some time with Jim, but next time I'll fly. To go to D.C. via Steranko's took us 3 days. We made the trip back in 9 hours. After a trip like that, I feel I could drive in the "Indy 500!"

John and Mary Fantucchio were our gracious hosts and have got to be two of the nicest people around. I only wish they lived a bit closer, so we could see more of them. (Mary cooks a mean breakfast too!)

It was Saturday, August 22nd, and we arrived at the Crystal City Motor Inn about a half hour before Sal Buscema's Keynote Address. We were happy and surprised to meet some old friends there. Marvin Wolfman and Irene and Ellen Vartanoff. We chatted for a few minutes and then went off to hear Sal Buscema. Since there is a limited amount of space, I'll hit on just the high points of the speech.

fighting AMERICAN

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Keynote

Sal stepped to the podium and remarked that he had the "world's worst" memory and asked the fans to bear with him while he read a prepared speech.

Sal spoke of how a year and a half ago he realized a life time ambition. He had become a comic book artist. For Sal, it had been a rewarding experiance. Rewarding in many ways, but rewarding most of all in the opportunity to meet and work with some very talented and creative people within the industry. Sal was also pleased to have met some very articulate and enthusiastic fans. There was one disapointment though, and that was the reaction of friends outside the industry to what he was doing for a living. He blamed their lack of knowledge of the media for this and the fact comics have "a pretty lousy image!"

Why do comics have a bad image? Sal felt it could be traced back to the time 15, or so, years ago; when some comics overstepped their bounds and presented material that was pretty rough. The public was appalled and this resulted in a black eye for the Comic Book Industry. After which, the Comics Code was created. Sal thought comics had made quite a comeback, since those days. The black eye was gone, but comics were still a little purple around the edges. Since this bad image still remained, it was felt, by Sal, that it was up to the industry to do something about it. And do something they have! As in New York, A.C.B.A. was proclaimed to be the answer. Most of what Sal explained about the organization, has already been covered in the preceding article on A.C.B.A., so I won't go into it here. The Keynote Address ended with Sal telling the fans that A.C.B.A.'s voice would upgrade the comics and put their bad image to rest.

After a brief rest, Sal, one of the nicest pros around, conducted a question and answer period.

What strip was Sal working on? Sal explained that Marvel was in a period of transition, because a very important man had left--Jack Kirby. Because of this, Sal would be doing The Avengers and Spiderman.

Sal's favorite character? The Hulk.

Did Sal think the super hero was dead?

No! For one simple reason. You always have a new group of kids coming along, who seem to get interested in super heroes. Super heroes may die out for a while, but they always seem to come back.

Did Sal feel it would hurt the comic companies to have more of their artists go out on their own?

"It won't hurt the industry. However, it always hurts when you lose a good artist. Like it was kind of a blow, when Jack Kirby left Marvel. Everyone knows he's the best in the business. It's good for the individual though."

Would Sal like to ink his own work? You bet he would. Every artist would.

When asked how he got interested in comics, Sal explained that his brother, John, had been in comics for over 20 years, so the interest came naturally. Sal went into advertising first, because when he wanted to break into the business, in the middle '50's, the bottom fell out of the industry.

Sal felt Frank Giacoia was the best inker in the business, followed by Joe Sinnott and Tom Palmer. "It's a shame they can't ink everybody," Sal stated. He thought the best book he ever turned out was The Avengers #78, inked by Palmer.

What's the rates for penciling and inking, and did Sal ever do coloring? He'd never done coloring. The rates on penciling are from $25 to $75 per page. For inking, $10 to $25 per page. Staff people usually do coloring, except in rare cases.

Why can't the same artist pencil and ink his own books? A matter of time. Right now John Buscema is penciling The Avengers, Thor and he'll be the new artist on the Fantastic Four. Even after John leaves The

Avengers, he'll have little time. If he stayed with all three books, he'd never get any sleep. He'd be working [illegible] hours a day.

Sal felt that comics were an art form, but that it would never become a great art form. His reason--"Too many people are involved in the production of one book. It's not the product of one single person."

On the use of photographs with artwork, Sal didn't like it. The photos never print well and, most often, turn out like black blobs.

Why are unpopular artists kept on books? Because as long as that book sells, the editor has no reason to change the artist.

Now the question period drew to a close and a gracious Sal Buscema thanked everyone and hoped all the fans had a good time.

(SAL BUSCEMA)

Luncheon The next event, on the days program, was a luncheon; with Berni Wrightson and Mike Kaluta as guests of honor. I have to say, that, of the [illegible] luncheons I've attended, the food at this one was the best. Very tasty indeed!

Marvin Wolfman made comic introductions of the two guests of honor and then told a bit about each guest's history. After everyone had finished eating, Marvin expertly moderated a question and answer period. The first question asked, was why did Web of Horror fold? Berni Wrightson answered..."It had distribution problems. It just never got around. Also the editor, Terry Bisson, left. They made Bruce Jones and myself editors and we had issue #4 all done and ready to come out, but it folded before publication."

What's new at National? Marvin Wolfman gave a few answers. Jack Kirby! He's working on 4 books there. Jimmy Olsen will feature the Newsboy Legion and upcoming, The Guardian. There will be new looks in covers and format. Price changes will be coming too.

Is Berni working for both National and Marvel? Yes, but he's doing most of his work for Marvel. Berni went on to tell how some of the Nighmaster pages, done for National, were done by both Mike Kaluta and Jeff Jones.

When asked if he would be inking Conan, Berni replied, "No! I couldn't ink Barry Smith's stuff. The lines just didn't flow the way mine did. I'll be inking some Gil Kane work though."

Marvin was asked if National's new book "Mr. Miracle" would be played straight, or as a comedy. "It will be straight," said Marvin, "but you'll probably laugh at it anyway." Marvin explained that all of Kirby's new books were one complete novel. All four books are tied in and feature all the same characters. All are in different phases of the same story. They're all working on the same mission.

Berni mentioned that the "King Kull" story he'd done would be appearing soon in a Chamber of Darkness. It was hoped, that if that book sold well, Kull would have his own book, or half a book.

What's Mike Kaluta doing at present? Working on a new humor book coming out, tentatively titled, "Zing". It will be like the old MAD Magazine. He also passed in a story for National, that he'd worked 6 months on. Mike enjoys doing fairy tales, something no pro publication seems to want. This seems a shame, as Mike's work is outstanding.

It was then brought to the fan's attention, that National's Showcase book had folded, because of lack of sales.

When The Guardian is brought back, in Jimmy Olsen, will it be the same character as in the '40's? "Yes, same character, only he'll be dead. You'll understand when you see it," said Marvin. "All of Jack's books are the most brilliant concepts I've ever read."

What type of story did Berni prefer to work on? Sword and sorcery and horror, because they're fun to do.

If Berni was to do a super hero, which character would he choose? Batman, for National and The Hulk for Marvel.

On creating his own character, Berni felt more comfortable with someone else's. He felt anything he might create would be repetitive of a character already created.

Mike Kaluta enjoyed E.R.B.'s John Carter of Mars series. He commented that John Carter's confidence brought him up through school, to the swashbuckler he is today. This brought heavy laughter from the audience.

To close the question and answer period, Berni was asked what his first published drawing was? "A drawing on the fan page of Creepy #9.

The luncheon at an end, Ellie and I left and ran into Bob Kline. Bob is one of the friendliest guys you'd ever want to meet and I spent quite a bit of time just sitting and talking with him. I also met Dave Cockrum and got to chat with him. You'll be seeing some of Dave's art in an upcoming issue of "Crusader". It was that kind of convention. Not as big and busy as New York's, but that was good. It gave a person a chance to sit and talk with friends and meet people you wouldn't perhaps have time to meet with in New York.

A chalk talk, by Sal Buscema, followed the luncheon. Sal demonstrated his technique by drawing 3 pictures. These were to be auctioned off later in the day. I have to admire Sal. Drawing a picture on a vertical drawing board, with a number of people looking on behind you, has to be one of the most difficult things an artist can do. I know I'd hate to do it. The mere thought of it, gives me chills. Sal drew his favorite character, The Hulk, a shot of the Silver Surfer and, at my request, a head shot of Thor. I purchased the Thor, for Ellie, later at the auction.

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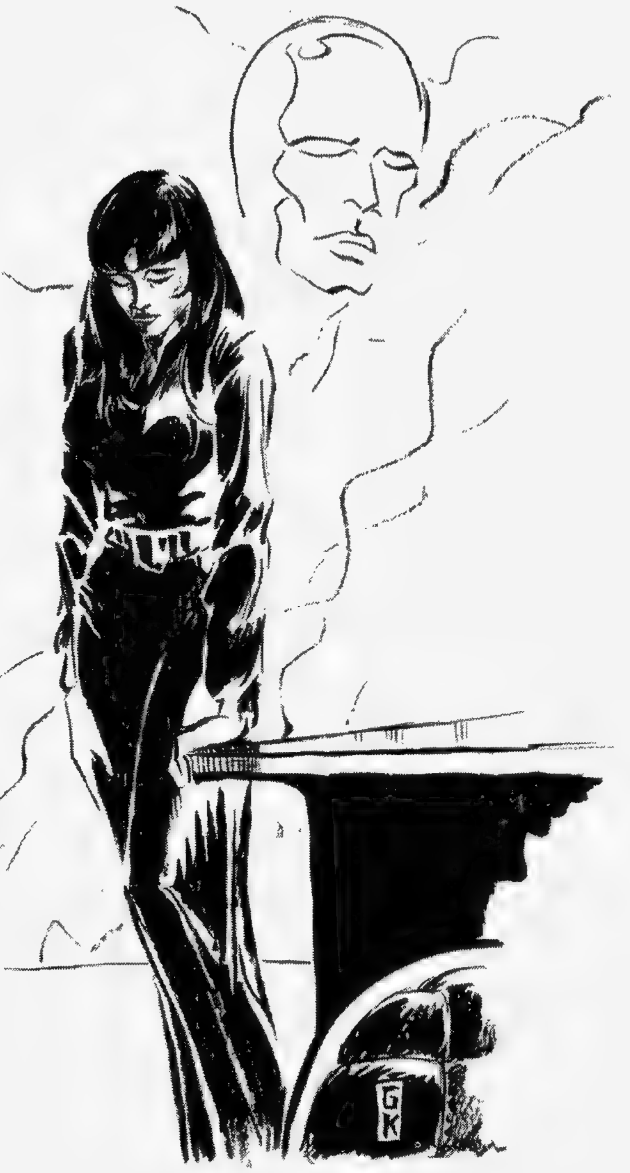


Sword & Sorcery

Quite a popular subject, at Con's this year, is sword and sorcery. The popular panel that discussed this popular subject at the Metro Con, consisted of Berni Wrightson (moderator) Bob Kline, Dave Cockrum, Mike Kaluta and Steve Hickman. Using the same format as in New York, Berni handed the mike to each panel member and let him express some thoughts on the subject.

Bob Kline: Bob thought the main problem with sword and sorcery in comics, would be in finding the correct way to present the subject. To find the right way to present a beautiful mental picture, created by an author, into pictures is a difficult thing at best. He also felt the Comics Code would hinder any sword and sorcery presentation.

Dave Cockrum: "The only way to handle sword and sorcery correctly, is through an uncensored magazine like Warren's." Dave would like to see someone present a sword and sorcery story, in comics, the same way they do in the novels. Present a story with the gloomy, horror type format.

Berni Wrightson: "Mood has a lot to do with sword and sorcery." That's the reason Berni didn't dig Barry Smith's Conan. He believed the character should center more on mood than muscle. Conan stories always relate to dark, gloomy moods. Berni spoke of Gil Kane's sword and sorcery stuff for Marvel. "It's a whole new and different approach than anyone's tried before."

Mike Kaluta: "I haven't seen too much sorcery. I've seen a lot of sword though." Mike felt that if the companies didn't make real sword and sorcery classics, it would all be a wasted effort.

Steve Hickman: "What is sword and sorcery? Robert E. Howard - that's sword and sorcery! He's the only guy, in this field, that can write it." Steve thought, that unless Conan was treated, in comics, the same way he was treated in novels, the book would be a poor one.

Opening statements made, the panel accepted questions from the audience.

How did the panelists enjoy Wally Wood's sword and sorcery stories? Berni answered, "I liked them. It's nice to see Wally's stuff come back, after kind of a slump."

Marvin Wolfman mentioned that if Conan and Marvel's other sword and sorcery stories sold, National had a sword and sorcery type book ready to come out. It would have its stories set in the future. The book had been shelved, when Nightmaster failed.

Did Berni think sword and sorcery would go over better in black and white and without the code? He felt it would do better without the Comics Code, but would rather see it in color. He didn't care for the Ditko stuff in Creepy. It didn't seem to have mood - too cartoony.

Why didn't Nightmaster sell? Berni believed it was too scater-brained. No one knew what was going on. Even Kubert's covers didn't help. That's the reason Kubert did the covers--to sell the magazines.

Will sword and sorcery sell? It depends on Conan! If it goes over, then there will be more to follow.

Has there ever been a sword and sorcery newspaper strip? Not really. Prince Valiant comes the closest.

For the most part, I've covered the material that dealt with sword and sorcery. The rest of the panel's conversation dealt with generalities on sales potential, who buys what type of comic, and if sword and sorcery is done, it should be done as an art form, rather than to make money.

The next event was a fun one for me. It was a film showing. John Fantucchio and I made sound effect and dubbed in voices for an 8mm. Batman film being shown. Needless to say, we did not play it straight. Since it was being broadcast in the dealers room, as well, I'm amazed that John and I weren't promptly bounced from the hotel. John's a great guy, but rowdy. Of course, he says the same thing about me. The film show was a lot of laughs. (For us anyway.)

That evening, John and Mary gave Ellie and me a wonderful tour of Washington at night. It was beautiful. Ellie and I will always remember it.

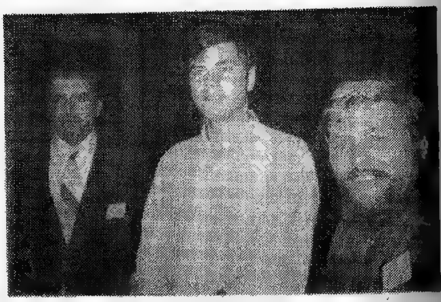
John Fantucchio

It was Sunday and the last day of the Metro Con. The first event of the day was a panel on comics, preceded by a short lecture by John Fantucchio.

John's talk was on comics - past, present, and future. As John talked, he uncovered various charts he had prepared to illustrate his points. He told about the birth of comics and how they were reprints of daily and Sunday comic strips. Moving on, John covered the birth of Superman, in June of 1938, and the use of similar names in super heroes. Names using similar colors, for instance: Black Condor, Black Hood, Black Owl, Black Terror and Black Knight. Names using doctor, for another: Doc Savage, Dr. Fate, Dr. Frost, Dr. Strange, Dr. Mid-Nite, and Dr. Hypno. John talked about the number of heroes with the title Captain and told of the beginning of the super patriots - the red, white and blue heroes that would last for years. Then the decline of comics was covered. The time, in the early '50's, when people seemed to lose interest in comics and the time when the Comics Code was formed, due to an alarming use of horror in comics. Next, John told of the '56 to '70 period. The new Flash's appearance in Showcase #4, the coming of Green Lantern, the Justice League of America and the birth of the Fantastic Four in 1961. This was the era of the re-emergence of the super hero. John closed his lecture by commenting on the colorful super heroes fading from sight and their replacement by western comics, mystery comics and a dab of sword and sorcery. What would the future hold for comics? The panel following John's talk would discuss this and other aspects of the comic media.

The members of this panel were John Fantucchio (moderator), Dave Cockrum, Marvin Wolfman, Sal Buscema, Berni Wrightson, Holly Langhorn, and your editor, Martin Greim.

Economics of comics, was the first thing discussed. Marvin explained how the upgrading of prices would also upgrade the page count. Sal Buscema commented that for 15 or 25 cents, comic books are about the most entertaining things on the market today. Berni Wrightson, would rather spend 25¢ for a good comic, with a complete story, or 4 short stories,



John Fantucchio, Bob Kline and Dave Cockrum

Berni Wrightson and Mike Kaluta

Bob Kline, Dave Cockrum, Berni Wright
Mike Kaluta and Steve Hickman

Dejah Thoris
Toss

than spend 15¢ for a comic with just 2 stories. John Fantucchio stated that in comparison of the comic book of the '40's, which was the highest priced publication of it's day, the comic of the '70's is one of the lowest, compared with what is on the market. I explained that comics, when placed on the stands, are in competition with the higher priced publications, such as Playboy and slick magazines of that type. The store ownere makes a profit on those magazines, where his profit on comics is almost nil! Holly Langhorn (mother of 2 boys and antique shop owner) suggested that comics like Casper the friendly ghost, remain in a lower price range, for the younger readers.

Distribution of comics was discussed between Dave Cockrum and his wife, who voiced a comment from the floor. Comics are hard to find today. Many places don't display comics well and they're hard to find. Marvin elaborated on the distribution problem. He explained that distribution is part of the cost problem in comics. Distributors take most of the profit. First you have your national distributor. He distributes the comics, nation wide, to the local distributors. The local distributors get them to the stores. They're reluctant to do this, because comics are taking up space they could use for more expensive publications. Finally, when the store owner gets the comics, he makes about 1¢ profit per comic. Now he'd make much more, on say Time Magazine. So it's a wonder that many places carry comics, when they take up space that a slick magazine could occupy.

How can fans help? Two ways. First, by complaining to your local distributor, when you can't find the comics. Call him, if you can't find comics locally. Complain! It's his job to find places to distribute comics - let him do it! The second way, is to write directly to the comic companies. Not to the editors, but to the companies. Write to Stan Lee, for Marvel or Carmine Infantino at National. When complaints come in, they'll contact their distributors and find out why.

Sal Buscema believed that comics should be updated. He felt that the distributors shouldn't mind a more lenient code type book, as long as they made money on it.

Berni Wrightson would like to see a Warren size magazine, with well painted covers and good interesting layout, for comics. He'd be willing to pay 75¢ to $1.00 for a good 64 page comic.

John Fantucchio and I got into a slight debate on the presentation of comics. John advocated a more expensive, hard cover, slick paper type of book, where I believe in the type of comic book being produced today. Most comic book readers aren't collectors like ourselves. They don't put comics into plastic bags, so they're untouched by human hands - they pick up a comic just to read it. You can fold it, carry it in your back pocket, do whatever you wan't with it. The comic book is both practical and salable in this format. I agree, on a book like Warren's or on the Time Magazine format. You can fold them, or do whatever you want, but a hardcover job, I just don't think it's salable enough. In answer to this, John thought two seperate lines of comics would be in order. One for the young adults and one for the adults. However, what if you dig the comics in the adult line, John? The idea of a slick magazine, in comic book form, was discussed. The idea was discarded, because of the production costs involved.

(MARVIN WOLFMAN)

Sal Buscema brought about a line of conversation that dealt with the changing of the name "Comic Book". National and Marvel really don't publish "COMIC" books. That term applies more to Harvey or Archie. However, to change the title of "Comic Book" to say, "Pictoral Novel" is a tremendous task. Comics have been branded with the title "Comic Book!" It's a matter of image.

This was, in essence, the Metro Con panel on the comics. A short time, after its end, John Fantucchio and Bob Kline judged an amateur art contest. First prize winner was Yuonne Saverin, who won a beautiful Don Newton painting of Superman.

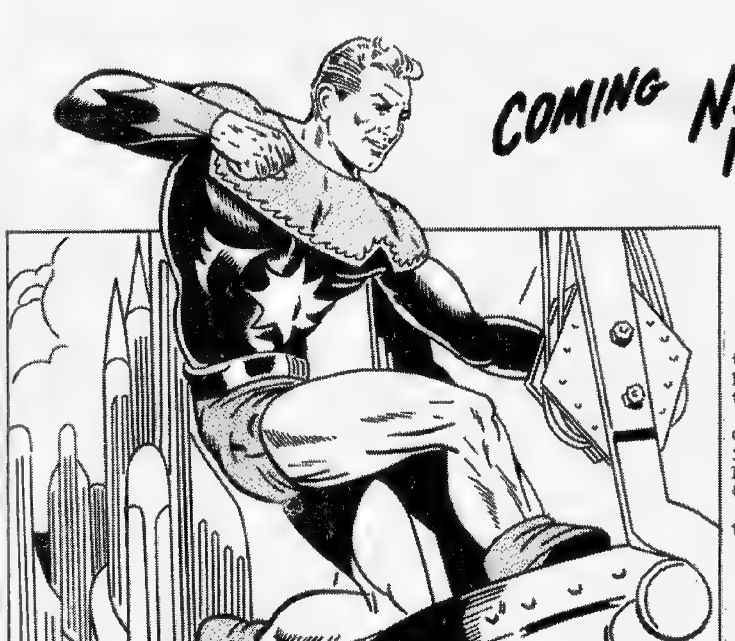
Auction An auction, of an hour and a half of Berni Wrightson's time, was the spectacular ending to the Metro Con. With Marvin Wolfman as auctioneer, the bidding raged to $130.00! There were two winners - Martin L. Greim and 6 guys bidding as a team against him. If I hadn't driven to Washington, D.C., I could never have bid that high. However, I did drive and I had the plane fare for bidding money. You'll see the results of my winning Berni, in a future issue of Comic Crusader.

I'd like to say now, that Gary Groth put on a tremendous Convention! It was, in many ways, as professional as the one in New York. I want to thank him for inviting me.

LATE NEWS!!!

Both Wally Wood and Martin L. Greim are due to become fathers. I don't know about Wally, but I'm walking on air! More on Wally - It was reported in New York that Wally would be editing a magazine for Warren. Problems arose and he will not be doing it!

COMING NEXT ISSUE! FLASH GORDON



In **COMIC CRUSADER No.11** the long promised article on FLASH GORDON FILMS, by MIKE ROYER, will be presented! Not only this, but the whole issue will be devoted to Flash Gordon!

The art, for this issue, will be second to none. Cover and interior art by Al Williamson. Other interior art by Mike Royer, Joe Sinnott, Dan Adkins, Bill Black, Don Newton, MLG, and the whole Comic Crusader art staff.

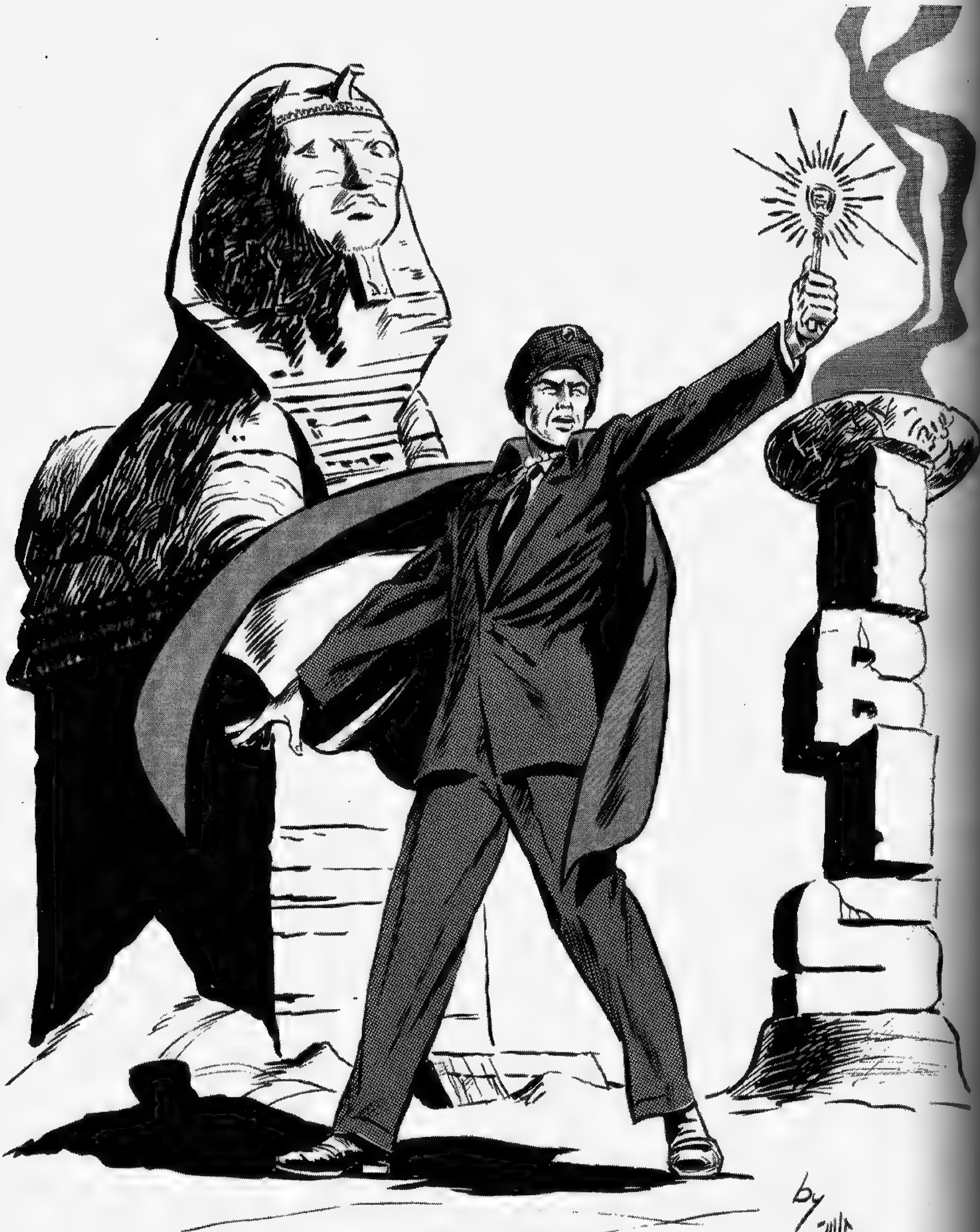
This issue will be a collector's item, in years to come! Don't miss it!

SEND 50¢ TO:
MARTIN L. GREIM
BOX 132
DEDHAM, MASS. 02026

(*NOTE - This issue will take some time to produce. Please do not write asking where it is. When it comes out, it will be well worth the wait!)

SUBSCRIPTIONS AT LAST!!!

Now you can subscribe to Comic Crusader for two issues! $1.00 will bring you issues 11 and 12. This is a two issue subscription only!



IBIS
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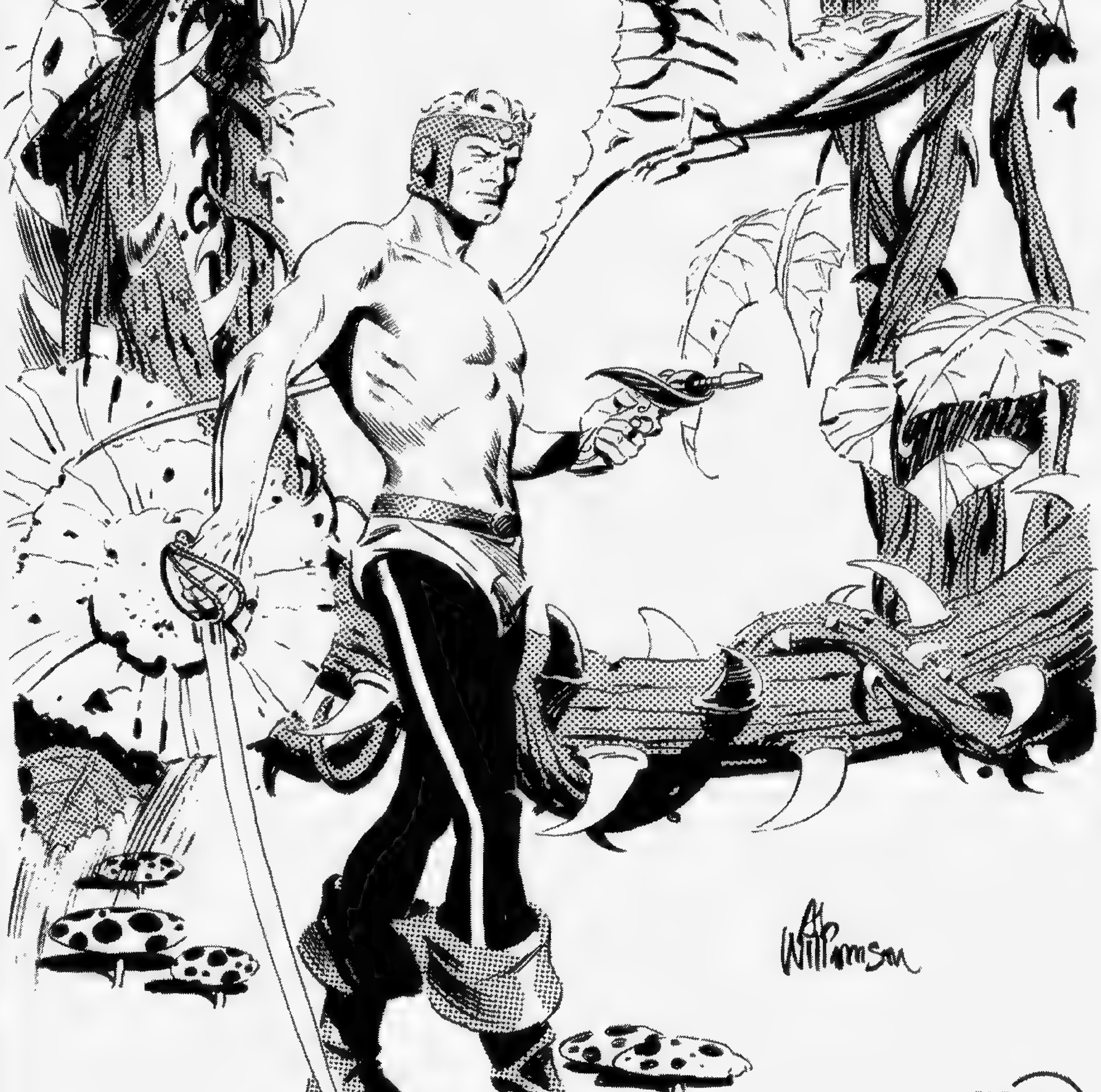
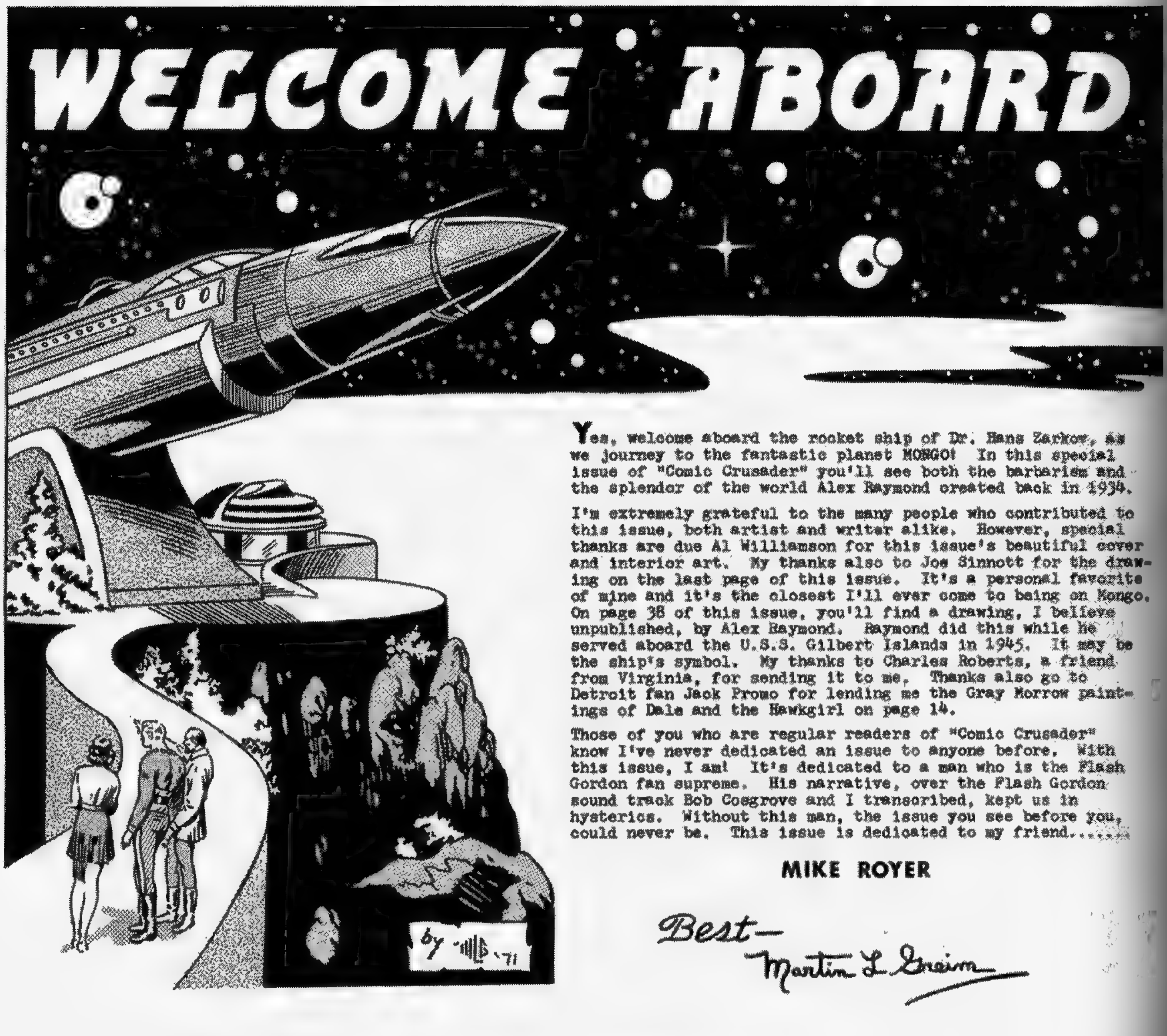
COMIC CRUSADER


Al Williamson

NO. 11

WELCOME ABOARD



Yes, welcome aboard the rocket ship of Dr. Hans Zarkov, as we journey to the fantastic planet MONGO! In this special issue of "Comic Crusader" you'll see both the barbarism and the splendor of the world Alex Raymond created back in 1934.

I'm extremely grateful to the many people who contributed to this issue, both artist and writer alike. However, special thanks are due Al Williamson for this issue's beautiful cover and interior art. My thanks also to Joe Sinnott for the drawing on the last page of this issue. It's a personal favorite of mine and it's the closest I'll ever come to being on Mongo. On page 38 of this issue, you'll find a drawing, I believe unpublished, by Alex Raymond. Raymond did this while he served aboard the U.S.S. Gilbert Islands in 1945. It may be the ship's symbol. My thanks to Charles Roberts, a friend from Virginia, for sending it to me. Thanks also go to Detroit fan Jack Promo for lending me the Gray Morrow paintings of Dale and the Hawkgirl on page 14.

Those of you who are regular readers of "Comic Crusader" know I've never dedicated an issue to anyone before. With this issue, I am! It's dedicated to a man who is the Flash Gordon fan supreme. His narrative, over the Flash Gordon sound track Bob Cosgrove and I transcribed, kept us in hysterics. Without this man, the issue you see before you, could never be. This issue is dedicated to my friend......

MIKE ROYER

Best—
Martin L. Greim

ART KEY

Adkins	37
Black	20-29-39-40-41-42
Cockrum	5-24-28
Foss	10
Fritz	Back Cover
Fujitake	25
Fukumitsu	34
Greim	2-3-8-15-22-27-39-40-41-42
Kato	23
Kline	11
Manning	35
Morrow	14-31
Newton	22
Pond	36
RAYMOND	38
Richardson	18
Royer	7-32
Sinnott	4-43
Sutton	2
Williamson	Cover-9-29
Williamson inked by Sinnott	6-13-27
Wrightson	17

COMING NEXT ISSUE!

ISSUE 12 - will have a barbaric flavor to it.

The feature article will be on Planet Comics' - "Lost World" by TOM FAGAN. A beautiful, full page illustration by JIM STERANKO accompanies this great article. It's one of the finest pieces Jim's ever done!

There will also be a strip or two - Some art by Berni Wrightson, Bob Juanillo and "Crusader's" regulars. A most unusual issue for only 50¢.

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FLASH GORDON FILMS

MONGO MANIA
by

ARTICLE BY:

MIKE ROYER

It's 1936 and Universal Pictures presents...... FLASH GORDON! The first of three Flash Gordon movie serials. A serial in 13 chapters, from the screenplay by Frederick Stephani, George Plympton, Basil Dickey and Ella O'Neill. Based on the newspaper feature entitled Flash Gordon, owned and copyrighted by King Features Syndicate. Photography by Jerry Ash and Richard Fryer. Produced by Henry MacRae.

The Cast of Characters:

FLASH GORDON - Larry "Buster" Crabbe, DALE ARDEN - Jean Rogers, EMPEROR MING - Charles Middleton, DR. ZARKOV - Frank Shannon, PRINCESS AURA - Priscilla Lawson, PRINCE BARIN - Richard Alexander, PRINCE THUN - James Pierce (who played Tarzan in "Tarzan and the Golden Lion" in 1927 and was Tarzan on the radio, in the early 30's), KING KALA - Duke York, Jr., HIGH PRIEST - Theodore Lorch, KING VULTAN - John Lipson, OFFICER TORCH - Earl Askam, ZONA - Muriel Goodspeed, PROFESSOR GORDON - Richard Tucker, PROF. HENSLEY - George Cleveland (kindly old "Gramps" of the original "Lassie" T.V. family in the 1950's).

The first few chapters faithfully follow the basic story elements of Alex Raymond's colorful Sunday pages. Where they do differ in plot, it is a case of budget which prohibited adding large casts, new sets and locales....and at the same time, the cast of a story that is seen only once a week, for approximately 20 minutes, it becomes quite necessary for the roster of characters to remain intimate, otherwise the viewer would need score cards to keep track of who's who. We'll concern ourselves with this point later, in various places.

Chapter one - "The Planet of Peril" (or..."When Worlds Collide, Anyone?")

At a large east coast observatory, we find Prof. Gordon and Prof. Hensley watching the approach of a mysterious planet, through the eye of a huge telescope. Both scientists agree, that the Earth is doomed.....as a result of a collision with the mysterious body in space. This is similar to the opening of the Jan. 7, 1934 Flash Gordon strip, in which a newspaper banner headline declared..."World Coming To End"..."Strange new planet rushing toward Earth - only miracle can save us, says science."

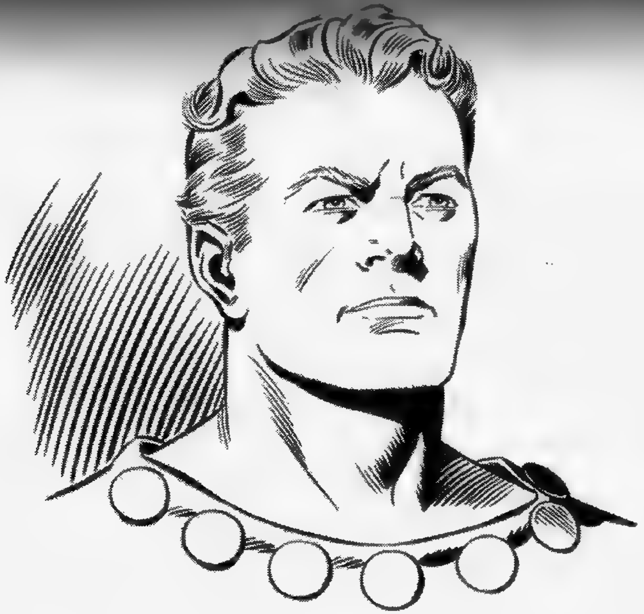
On film, Hensley remarks - "I wonder why we don't hear from Zarkov? I still believe in his theory!" Prof. Gordon - "Ridiculous! Zarkov is mad! His theory's fantastic! He'll never reach the planet in that rocket-ship!"

Dr. Zarkov is introduced to the strip reader by Raymond's following narrative..."The scientist, Dr. Zarkov works day and night, perfecting a device with which he hopes to save the world--his great brain is weakening under the strain!"

At the observatory, the two scientists read several telegrams apprasising conditions and reactions all over the world. As they read, the movie viewer sees several pieces of stock newsreel type footage depicting panic, pandemonium and riots all over the world. Thus far, the flesh and blood characters of Gordon and Hensley are acting only as audio and visual translaters of Raymond's comic strip narrative panels 2, e, 4, and 5 of the first Sunday page. The use of screen scientists is more effective than voice over narrative and better paced than the stacato tempo of Raymond's first Sunday page.

Prof. Gordon is handed one last telegram. "Why... It's from my son, Flash!" pause to read - "He gave up his polo oane just in time to catch the transcontinental plane...hoping to be here with us before the end!"

The scene shifts to that transcontinental plane. Aboard we find young virile Flash Gordon. In the strip, he is introduced to us as "...Yale graduate and world-renowned polo player." Across the aisle from Flash, sits the very attractive blond, we will soon discover is Dale Arden...soft and beautiful. Larry Ivie tells us that Miss Rogers was allowed to appear with her normal hair color because of the public's fondness for



My favorite Flash shot Marty –
Joe Sinnott

① Aboard the transcontinental plane, Flash helps Dale with her chute. ② The meeting with Dr. Zarkov. ③ Aboard Zarkov's rocket ship.

the color at the time, as popularized by the "Blond Bombshell" Jean Harlow. Dale's hair color, as drawn by Raymond, was brunette.

The airplane is being tossed about violently in a fierce electrical and meteor storm, caused by the close proximity of the strange planet. The pilots, afraid that their craft may not survive the meteor shower, advise their passengers to make use of the parachutes that they will find at the back of their seats. The passengers hurry to exit the plane. Dale hesitates at the open door - Flash moves to her side, says - "Scared, huh?", takes her in his arms, and leaps from the plane, both of them supported by the girl's chute.

In the strip, a flaming meteor tears loose from the approaching "comet", (as Raymond called it this first week) and sears off a wing of the plane. Flash takes the girl, who was sitting across the aisle from him, in his arm and "bails out", as the stricken plane plummets earthward. They land near the observatory of Dr. Zarkov, where they see a rocket ship.

On film, Flash and Dale approach the rocket ship, when suddenly Zarkov steps from concealment, holding a gun. Zarkov - "Stop! Stay where you are!" Flash - "I'm sorry if we're intruding. Parachutes aren't particular where they set you down." Zarkov - (ignoring Flash's sarcasm) "Who are you?" Flash - "Well, I didn't have time to drop a calling card! This is Miss..." He turns to Dale. Dale - "Dale Arden!" Flash - "Nice name", then to Zarkov, "And I'm Flash Gordon!" Zarkov - "Gordon...Gordon? Prof. Gordon's son?!" Flash - "Yeh...that right! An' that rocket ship makes you Dr. Zarkov!"

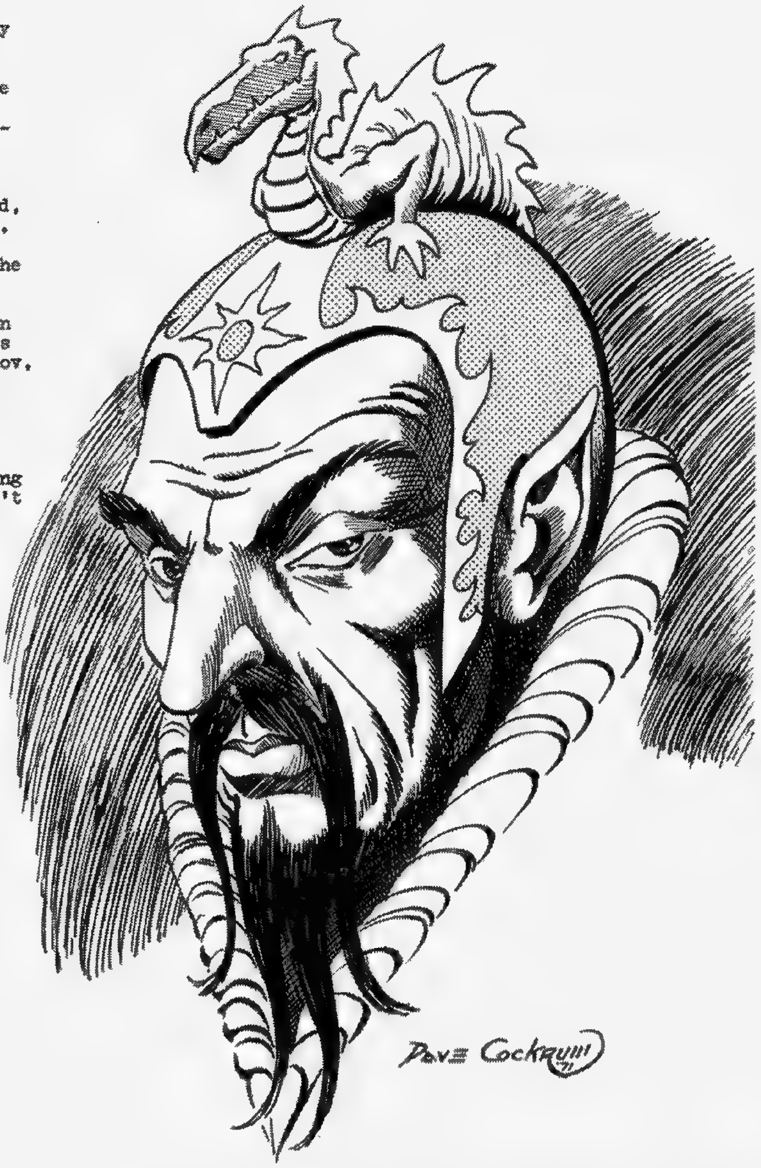
In the strip, Zarkov forces Flash and Dale, at gunpoint, to accompany him to Mongo as martyrs to science. In the film, Zarkov explains that his assistant has turned coward and asks Flash to go with him to save the Earth. Dale accompanies the two men, because there is no place of safety on the Earth where she may remain. With an explosion, Zarkov's rocket lifts into the air and rockets into the stratosphere. The trip is uneventful, with the exception of when Dale almost passes out from lack of oxygen, which reminds Zarkov to turn it on... something he forgot to do in the excitement of take off.

Things are a bit different in the comic strip. (1-14-34) The closer they approach the comet threatening Earth, the madder Zarkov becomes - until he finally cracks. A battle ensues between Flash and Zarkov, with Flash finally knocking the doctor to the floor unconscious. The rocket succumbs to the planet's gravitational pull and crashes. Flash scrambles from the wreck, with the unconscious Dale Arden in his arms, only to be menaced by a giant lizard. Zarkov has been left behind, buried under debris in the control section of his rocket... presumably dead.

In the film, the ship makes a perfect and smooth landing and the trio emerge unenjured to be menaced by lizards. Now the lizards of the serial are stock "budget" dinosaurs...i.e. Lizards with fins scotch-taped to their backs, blown up photographically, and superimposed with shots of the live actors. Despite this fact, Universal's effects people did a fair job with this sequence.

The trio is saved, from the menace of the lizards, by the approach of a strange rocket ship. It swoops down over the lizards and kills them with a ray shot from the nose of the ship. The ship lands next to Zarkov's and two metal clad soldiers emerge from the ship. This scene is almost a literal translation of panel 8...Jan. 21, 1934...Torch's ornate dragon brest-plate and all.

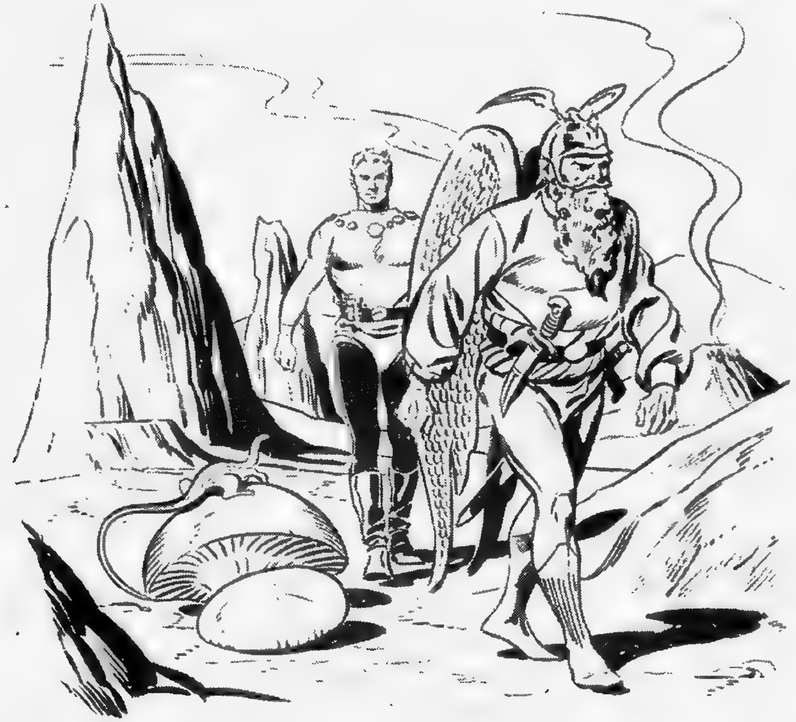
To their rescuers, Flash says - "Thanks for saving us." Torch - "Stand back! You are prisoners!" Flash - "Prisoners?!" Torch - "Silence! You are to be taken to Ming, Emperor of the Universe!" And indeed they are. They are flown in Torch's ship to a city atop a mountain peak. We see the large throne room of Ming, Emperor of the Universe. Several steps lead to the dias, where Ming sits on his throne. At the bottom of the steps is an area large enough to double as an arena...which it does shortly. Ming is surrounded by soldiers in their Roman-like garments and to his side, the ever present High Priest. Ming glares at his three captives and demands to know their reason for entering his kingdom. Zarkov explains that his planet is rushing madly towards the planet from which they came, and that collision can only mean the distruction of both. Ming replys - "No, there will be no collision. I control absolutely the movements of this planet, and I will destroy your Earth in my own way." This is an interesting piece of dialogue, because, here the serial writers clear up something Raymond apparently didn't consider worth messing with - an explanation as to why Earth and Mongo never collided. With Flash's landing, on the strange planet, Raymond never again concerned himself with this problem...the reason why our heroes rocketed to Mongo in the first place. By the third Sunday, the readers probably weren't worried about it...there was enough happening to Flash. However, on film, an explanation was very important, to retain plausibility and credibility. So...there you have it.



In the strip, the two prisoners before him, Ming declares, "The beauty of the female pleases me---she shall be my wife---the young man shall be slain..." Flash trys to break free of the soldiers, to get at Ming, and the Emperor orders that he be taken to the arena, where he will meet in mortal combat the four red monkey men of Mongo. (end of Sunday page no. 3... 1-21-34.) On film, in response to Ming's remarks about destroying the Earth, Zarkov, in an action never explained afterward, (one must speculate that he is only playing for time, or is still greatly concerned with the prevention of Earth's destruction) says - "Why destroy the Earth - why not conquer it?" Ming agrees. Zarkov explains how it was a rocket, of his own design, that brought him to Mongo. Ming then orders him taken to his laboratory, where he will be given all that he desires, except his freedom. When Ming turns his attentions to Dale, Flash lunges at him, trying to choke him. He is recaptured and thrown into the arena, that I mentioned previously. Princess Aura pushes her way past soldiers and hand maidens to stand beside her father's throne. Aura - "A bargain father! If he survives, he is mine!" Ming sneers - "IF!"

A gong is struck, and Flash stands in the arena as three man-beasts, with long fangs, dressed only in fur G-strings, snarl to the attack. These are the film counterparts of Raymond's Monkey Men. Ming watches intently, as one by one, Flash disables the ape-men. Ming - "He fights well, the Earthman! But he shall not escape the pit!"

④ Flash, Dale and Zarkov are brought before Ming the Merciless!
⑤ Dale watches, as the Monkey Men are released. ⑥ Flash vs. Monkey Men!

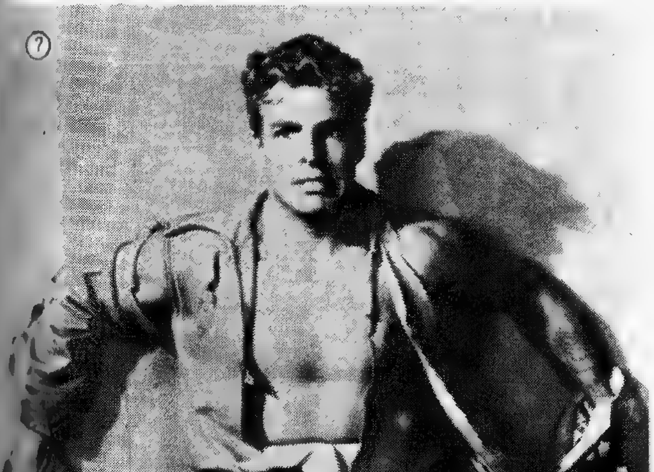


Aura (rising in protest) rushes down into the arena where Flash is defeating his last advesary with a full nelson (as in the strip). She forces her way past the guards to stand beside Flash. Ming orders that his daughter be removed from the arena. Aura shouts up to her father - "He's earned the right to live!" Torch and his men rush in and they grapple with Flash. Ming, who is standing in front of his throne, shouts - "The Pit!" A soldier reaches to pull a lever on a wall control panel, but Aura shoots him with a ray gun, dropped by one of the soldiers battling with Flash. As the soldier slumps to the floor dying, he pulls the lever and both Aura and Flash plummet headlong down a dark shaft that opened in the floor. We hear the suggestion of splashing, as if bodies were striking water, but all we do know, is that, as Dale and the others look on horror struck, something pretty fierce has happened to our hero. To be continued next week.

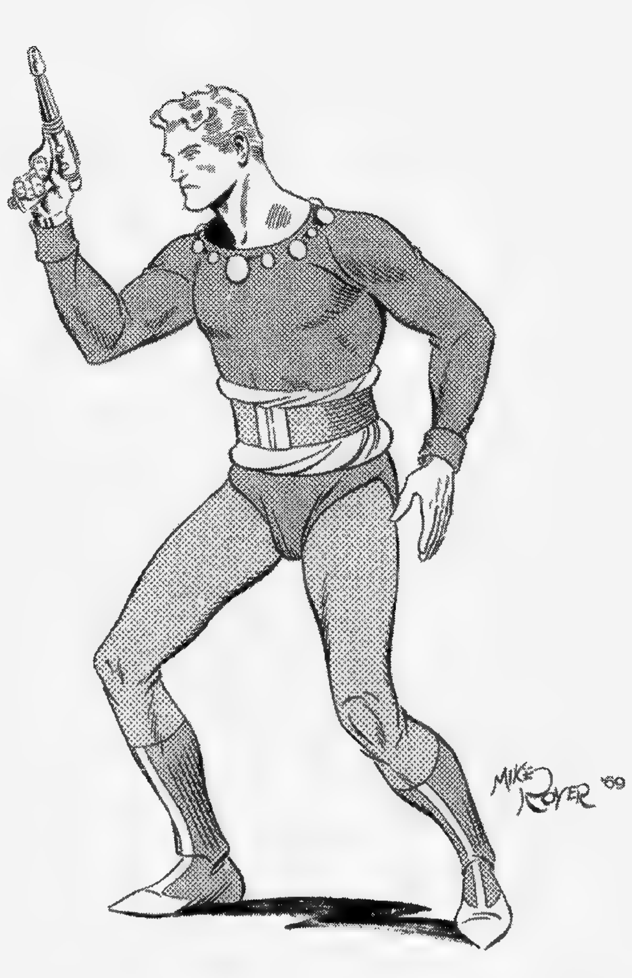
In the strip, after Flash has defeated the Monkey Man, Ming orders him shot. In trying to escape, Flash leaps into the balcony box of Aura. She flings herself in front of Flash shouting - "Stop! Stop, I say! If you kill this man, you must also kill me!" As she says this, a trap door in the floor of the box opens! Flash falls through, and undlinchingly Aura leaps after him. They hurtle into "The Hole of Horrors!" (end of Sunday page no. 4 Jan. 28, 1934)

Chapter Two - "The Tunnel Of Terror"

After the written forward and recap scenes, and seeing Flash and Aura plummet down the yawning blackness of the pit, there is no splashing sound in episode two!! Ming shouts - "The Net! Save my daughter!" A guard quickly jumps to the control panel, pulls a switch, and we hear the noise of something scraping into place. Ming looks through a small round glass window on the control panel and says - "They're in the net! Make prisoners of them both!" Torch and several soldiers march out to do this, but it is not to be. Flash and Aura escape the net through a secret door leading to some underground caverns. As they hide from the approaching guards, Flash inquires of Aura - "I wonder what happened to Dale and Dr. Zarkov?" Aura - "No doubt my father is holding them prisoners." Then she looks at Flash and adds - "You like the Earthwoman?" Flash doesn't answer, because the guards pass dangerously close and he cautions Aura to remain silent. The scene now shifts to Ming's magnificent laboratory. In these first few episodes, when we see the lab, it's quite impressive...a very large room with stone walls covered with scientific type gadgets, etc. The ceiling is probably a couple of stories high. At one end of the lab is a very nice stone staircase leading up to the ceiling and whatever lies beyond. Emperor Ming very slowly walks down this stone pathway, stopping occasionally to watch, with fascinated interest, Dr. Zarkov, who messes with the electronic gadgetry. Zarkov smiles, evidently enjoying this experience...like a li'l boy with a brand new toy. We are treated to all the fantastic laboratory effects that Universal Pictures is famous for. Flashy, visually impressive...but in reality incredibly non-functional. Ming asks - "Does my workshop compare favorably with those on Earth, Dr. Zarkov?" Zarkov - "There is no comparison, your Majesty. This is a scientists paradise." Then the doctor asks - "What has become of my friends from the Earth?" Ming slyly replies - "Do not worry! They are being cared for! Heh!" Zarkov - "The flow of radioactive energy here is great enough to conquer the universe!" Ming - "Which I intend to do, with your aid, Zarkov!"



⑦ Flash in the arena.



Princess Aura, in the meantime, has guided Flash through the caverns to a rocket ship that rests at the entrance to one of many tunnels on the planet's surface. She opens the rockets door and bids Flash to wait there while she goes to speak with her father. Flash protests, insisting he must find Dale. Aura convinces him that his presence would only bring harm to the Earthgirl. Flash relents and stays at the rocket ship. As Aura leaves, she mutters to herself a solemn vow - "You will never see Dale Arden again!"

Meantime, Ming has instructed his High Priest to use the dehumanizer on Dale. This is to prepare her for her marriage to Ming. As the priest leaves, Ming turns to Zarkov, explaining - "Science can overcome all things...even the human emotions!"

Back at the rocket ship, Flash has exchanged his tattered shirt and riding pants for the brief super-Mongo clothes he has found in a wall compartment of Aura's ship. An alarm sounds, and in the sky Flash sees a fleet of Gyro ships (weird top shaped crafts that are spinning). Flash dashes to the controls of the ship. The rockets fire, and in moments he is airborne. Ming, in the laboratory, alerted by the air raid alarm, is watching the viewscreen with Zarkov. He orders out the rest of his fleet to aid the lone pilot who has stretched skyward to do battle with the invaders, single-handed.

Flash does a good job of holding his own...

especially for one who is flying a rocket ship for the first time. Ming comments that whoever that gallant pilot is, he will be royally rewarded...if he survives the flight.

In the comic strip, after Flash enters the rocket ship, Aura slams the door shut and bolts it. Aura - "Now! You are mine! Dale Ardan shall not have you! I shall hold you here until she becomes my father's bride!" Note that Raymond incorrectly spelled Dale's last name. He did this for weeks.

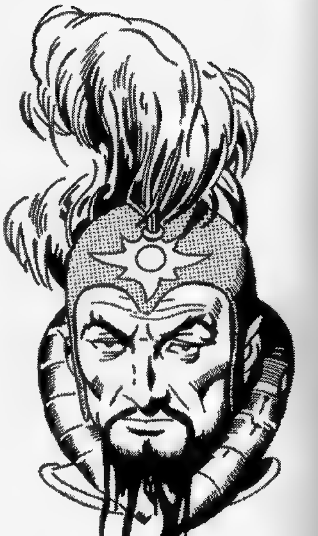
On film, Flash isn't doing bad. He brings one of the Gyro ships down, but before he can do more damage to the invading fleet, the nose of his ship becomes engaged with the lead Gyro ship and the two vessels spin, locked together, to the ground below. Flash, unhurt, leaps from his wrecked ship at the same time as Prince Thun emerges from his ship. The bearded Lion Man draws his sword and lunges at Flash. Flash disarms the Lion Man. Thun - "Why do you not slay me?" Flash - "I fought only to save my friends who are prisoners in Ming's palace!" Thun - "Then you're not an ally of Ming?!" Flash - "I'll say I'm not! He's been trying to kill me ever since I landed here!" Thun explains, after introducing himself, that Ming is also his enemy. So an alliance is formed between Flash and the prince of the Lion Men. Above them, Ming's fleet is defeating the Gyro ships, who are now retreating. Thun leads Flash to a secret passage that leads to the palace. There, they hope to rescue Dale. Notice how everyone knows where all the secret passages and doors are?!

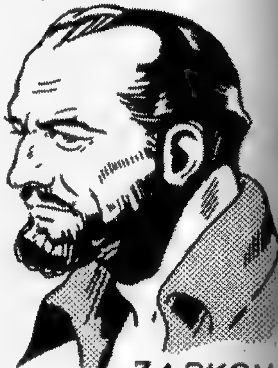
Thun and Flash capture a guard, at the rear gate of the palace and force him to lead them to Dr. Zarkov. They greet each other excitedly and here we find out what concerns Flash more than the safety of the Earth. Zarkov - "Flash! I didn't know what they had done to you!" Flash - "Ah, I'm alright! This is Thun, a friend!" Zarkov - "Flash! The course of this planet has been changed! The Earth will not be destroyed!" Flash - "Ah, that fine! Where's Dale?!" Flash soon learns that Ming is forcing her to become his bride, in a ceremony held in a secret chamber under the palace. Flash forces a guard to lead he and Thun to the place of the ceremony, but the guard stops at the entrance of a tunnel, for fear of the great beast that guards it. Meanwhile, everyone is gathering in the underground wedding ceremony chamber. At one end of the room is a large stone idol of Tao. Dale is escorted into the room, wearing a long white flowing open middriff gown. She is obviously under the hypnotic spell of the dehumanizer. She stares blankly into space. The ceremony begins. In an alcove, off the chamber, a soldier strikes a large gong. He's separated from the others by a wall of drapes. One of Ming's lieutenants, informs Zarkov (who got in the easy way, with Ming) that with the 13th stroke of the sacred gong, the wedding ceremony will be completed.

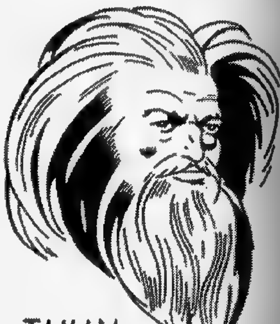
Back in the underground tunnel Flash and Thun are on their way to stop the wedding, when they hear the gong reverberating through the catacombs. Thun explains its meaning and Flash plunges on to save Dale. At this point, they run into a detatchment of Ming's guards. A brief fight follows and Thun yells to Flash to go on without him. Flash races down the tunnel until he comes to two massive wooden doors. All the time, the gong is sounding at regular intervals. He pushes open the doors and in the mist filled tunnel beyond, comes face to face with the giant beast that guards the Tunnel of Terror. Flash is grasped in its crab like claws and lifted off the ground. As the picture fades, the last thing we see is the yawning jaws of the hideous protector of the tunnel about to close on a helpless Flash Gordon.

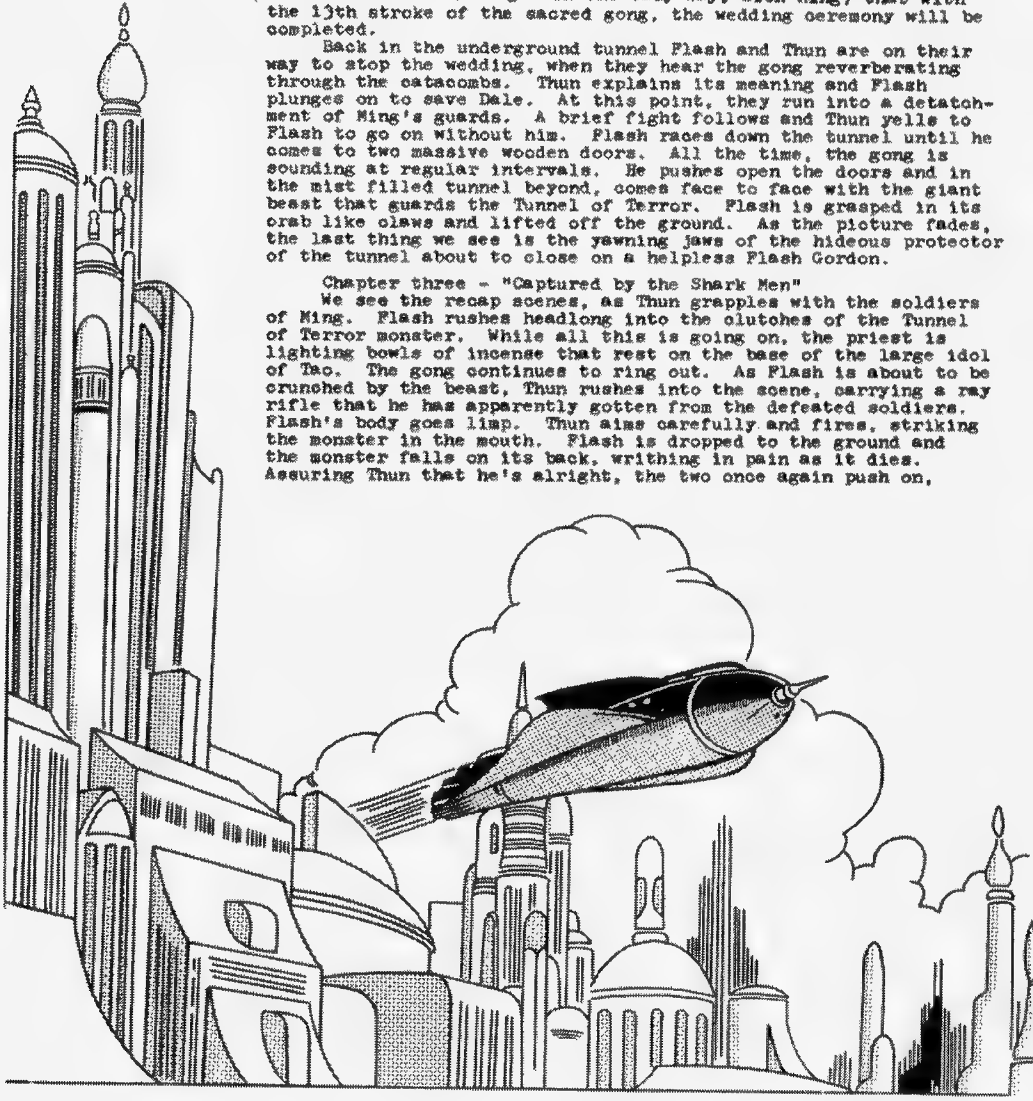
Chapter three - "Captured by the Shark Men"

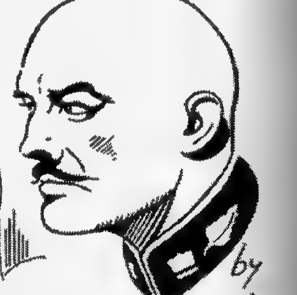
We see the recap scenes, as Thun grapples with the soldiers of Ming. Flash rushes headlong into the clutches of the Tunnel of Terror monster. While all this is going on, the priest is lighting bowls of incense that rest on the base of the large idol of Tao. The gong continues to ring out. As Flash is about to be crunched by the beast, Thun rushes into the scene, carrying a ray rifle that he has apparently gotten from the defeated soldiers. Flash's body goes limp. Thun aims carefully and fires, striking the monster in the mouth. Flash is dropped to the ground and the monster falls on its back, writhing in pain as it dies. Assuring Thun that he's alright, the two once again push on,


MING


ZARKOV


THUN




BARIN

racing against time. They discover the chamber and by the shadows on the alcove wall, we see Flash jump the gong wielder and trottle him. There are a few moments of silence and the wedding party becomes uneasy. Ming demands - "Why does not the sacred gong sound the final note which completes the wedding ceremony?!" As if in answer, everyone's attention is commanded by a movement of the Great God Tao's arm. The huge statue begins to wobble on its base, then it topples over into the midst of the startled wedding guests. The whole situation is one of chaos. During the confusion, Flash and Thun rush into the chamber. It is obvious that they are responsable for the idol's actions. While Thun covers those assembled, with his ray rifle, Flash lifts the dazed Dale into his arms and they make a break for freedom. Our heroes are now apparently taking an escape route that will take them even further underground. The tunnel is blocked by a wooden door, but one blast of Thun's ray rifle removes it. Back in the wedding chamber, Ming yells - "They're fleeing into the passage that leads to the underground river! Prepare to operate the water trap!" Aura - "But that will deliver them to Kala, king of the Sharkmen!" Ming - "Well!" Aura - "The Earthman Gordon must not be killed. He is mine!" Ming, to Torch - "Obey my order!" Zarkov - "You order their death?" Ming - "No, Dr. Zarkov! Death will not come to them so easily, heh!" Torch steps to a control panel. Meantime Flash, with Dale in his arms and Thun are running down a long spiral stone staircase. At the bottom, they are met by soldiers. Again Thun creates a holding action, as he yells to Flash - "Take her away! I can handle 'em!" With Dale in his arms, Flash starts downward again, leaving Thun fighting the soldiers. Torch and Ming are watching the escape, through a view glass on a wall control panel. Torch informs Ming that Aura has followed the others into the river tunnel. Ming orders that Kala be notified to make prisoners of them all, his daughter included, if they live to reach his palace. Flash and Dale come to the end of the tunnel and find their way barred by a door they can not open. At this same moment Torch is turning a handle on a control board that drops Flash and Dale through a trap door. This deposits them into an underground river, where they are subdued by Sharkmen.

Princess Aura comes upon Thun rising to his feet at the bottom of the stone staircase, evidently the victor in his fight. Aura - "The Sharkmen have taken them prisoner! I can get into Kala's palace if you'll help me!" Thun - "I'll do anything to help my friends!" They turn back the way they came.

Flash and Dale find themselves prisoner in the Hydra-cycle, the underwater craft of the Sharkmen. It is interesting that the serial model makers made the same mistake in constructing this craft that Raymond did. They put the propelliors on the front of the underwater craft! It just won't work, fellas. Oh well, despite this fact, with only one stop to avoid being seen by an octosac, the Hydra-cycle makes it to the Sharkmen's underwater city. The octosac is diverted by the arrival of a giant shark, that engages it in battle. Actually, what we see is a piece of stock footage of a shark and octopus fight. It probably wowed 'em in 1936, but today it only contributes in helping make this episode one of the most dull and padded of the whole series. The model of the Sharkmen's city is a bit disappointing, compared to the other cities to be seen in the serials. It just looks like a bunch of radio tubes stuck in the ground. Oh well...picky, picky.

⑧ Thun and Flash, having interrupted the marriage ceremony, are about to exit, with the dehumanized Dale in Flash's arms.

Our heroes are brought before King Kala. Kala tells them that Dale is to be returned to Ming. Enraged, Flash yells - "For what reason?!" Kala - "One does not question the orders of Ming! They are obeyed!" Flash - "Yes...obeyed by you and other puppets!" Kala - "I am King Kala!" Flash - "You, who call yourself a king, are a coward!" Kala - "Coward!? I can crush the life out of you with my hands!" Flash - "If I could be killed by a weakling like you, I should welcome death!" Kala - "Prepare yourself!" Well, as you can guess, Flash fights with Kala and after a furious fight defeats him. As his soldiers help him to his feet, Kala says - "You are the first man to ever defeat me in physical combat. I salute you! Take them to their seperate quarters... See that they are both released in the morning!" "Thank you Kala!", says Flash.

Flash should have saved his thanks, for Kala has him locked in a water tight room, which he soon floods with a torrent of water. With Dale in his clutches, Kala pulls a large handle and a side panel open in Flash's nearly flooded room. A giant octosac floats in. Flash sees it rising toward him. He tries to swim away, but it grabs him by the foor. Dale watches aghast, as Flash is pulled to the bottom of the tank room. Kala says - "No man can pit his strength against Kala...and live!" And as Flash is pulled to the bottom, his body encircled by the, unfortunately, by today's standards, unconvincing fake octosac, the picture fades, and we might find ourselves agreeing with Kala.

Up until this time, the serial has followed the strip to some degree. However, there was no octosac in the strip and Flash escapes from the tank cell with the aid of a mysterious party that passes an air helmet and a weapon to him through a panel in the wall. (Sunday page 3-25-34) Flash, in the serial, escaped in a different way, as we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter Four - "Battling the Sea Beast"

After the printed foreward and recap scenes, we see Kala instructing some honey to see that Dale misses nothing. And so, while Flash fights for his life, Zona holds Dale at the window. Dale faints and falls unconscious. She is then taken by Sharkmen guards to her saran wrapped quarters. Leaving the alcove, Kala is faced by Aura, who marches in followed by Thun, demanding to know what he has done with the Earthman. Meantime, Flash struggles with the phoney octosac. Aura pushes past the drapes to see Flash's predicament. Aura - "Stop that fight...at once!" Kala - "How does one stop an octosac?" Aura - "By drawing the water from the tank! Now DO IT!" Flash is saved. Aura leaves to release Flash, while Thun is left to stand guard over Kala. Dale regains consciousness and joins Thun. From their window, Thun and Dale see that Flash is all right. Dale is ready to go to Flash, but Thun cautions her that they should wait until Flash and Aura come for them.

Now the scene shifts to Ming's city atop the mountain peak. Zarkov is seated at a radio set, attempting to make contact with Earth. On Earth, Prof. Gordon and Hensley are also before a radio set. Hensley - "What do you make of it, Prof. Gordon?" Gordon - "I believe the sounds, which have so far defied scientific detection, are signals from that strange planet whos wild rush toward the Earth stopped so suddenly and mysterously."

Hensley - "You believe that someone from another planet is trying to signal us?" Gordon - "Yes!"

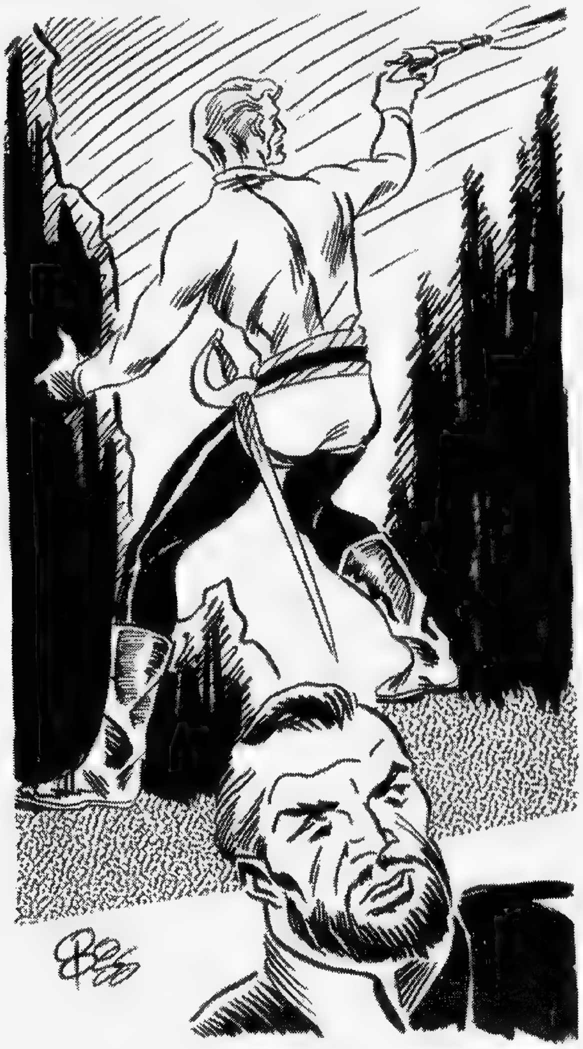
Zarkov's attempts are interrupted by Ming, who is entering the lab, via the long stone staircase. Ming assures Zarkov that his friends are being cared for by Kala. Zarkov asks - "But how can you be sure that Kala will obey your order?" Ming - "Kala's palace is constructed from a metal produced in this laboratory. It is held under water by a magnetic force controlled from here. He is absolutely in my power!"

In another part of the lab, Capt. Torch and another fellow, dressed like a medieval monk, are watching the screen of the space-o-graph. On the screen, several soldiers of Ming are fighting with a bunch of cave men types. Torch says - "Looks like a fight between the outer guards and Queen Lura's cave men! I must warn the Emperor!" Torch steps up to Ming and Zarkov, who are engaged in a psuedo-scientific discussion, but Ming brushes him away, not wishing to be disturbed. Torch turns and marches away, back to the space-o-graph.

Back at the city of the Sharkmen, Aura and Flash come upon a Sharkman standing before a wall lined with all kinds of switches and gauges. Aura - "We must overpower the guard!" Flash - "Why?" Aura - "To aid our escape!" Flash jumps the fellow and most of the time we see the fight in shadows on the wall. This shadow fighting is nowhere near as effective as Michael Curtiz would do a few years later in the dueling sequences on films like "Adventures of Robin Hood" and "Sea Hawk". However, it at least shows somebody wanted to do something besides stock stuff.

As Flash throttles the Sharkman, Aura picks up a ray-pistol, dropped during the fight, and fires it at the control panel. Aura explains that only by knocking out the machine that provides air and keeps the water out of the city, can they make good their escape. Flash asks about Dale and Thun and Aura replies - "We musn't think of them now!" Flash - "I'm going back after them!"

Back again in Ming's lab, we find Torch and the space-o-graph operator still watching the screen. However, the image on it now is the control panel Princess Aura has just destroyed.



In Kala's throneroom alcove, Dale is having great difficulty in breathing. Kala - "Something has happened to the air machines!"

At the space-o-graph, Torch orders its operator to find out what is the matter. On the screen we see panels straining, as water is trying to force its way into the palace. Dale falls to the floor unconscious. Knowing that they can not save themselves, Kala says to Thun - "Our only hope lies with Ming!" As more and more water rushes into the city, they try to get through to Ming on the space-o-graph.

As you can tell, several things are happening at once. The rapid cuts from place to place help greatly in building up the fever pitch that now will lead us to the climax of this installment.

Torch, seeing on the space-o-graph, that the Shark palace is starting to crumble, races over to Ming to tell him about this. Ming - "Why was I not informed before?" Torch's reply is - "But your Majesty, I tried to..." But we know differently, don't we. What happened to Queen Lura?! Hmmm. What the serial writers had in mind is open to speculation, but it's interesting that the editors left in the footage which was the beginning of something that was obviously never returned to. And why Queen Lura? In the strip, it is Queen Azura who rules the cave world. Was it her soldiers shown on the space-o-graph earlier, before the Shark city sequence? Double Hmmm!!

Ming, Zarkov and Torch stand before the viewscreen. Zarkov - "Can nothing be done to save them?" Torch - "Too late!" The screen shows Flash and Aura race to the throneroom, rivets strain, water pours down corridors, and Kala turns knobs. Flash runs up, picks up Dale in his arms. Flash - "Thun! We've got to get out of here!" Thun - "We haven't a chance!" Flash - "Why not?" Kala - "It's only a couple seconds before the sea will rush in!" As our heroes all turn to leave the alcove, they look up to see a giant tidal wave coming at them. As the picture fades, our heroes are completely obliterated from view, by a wall of water.

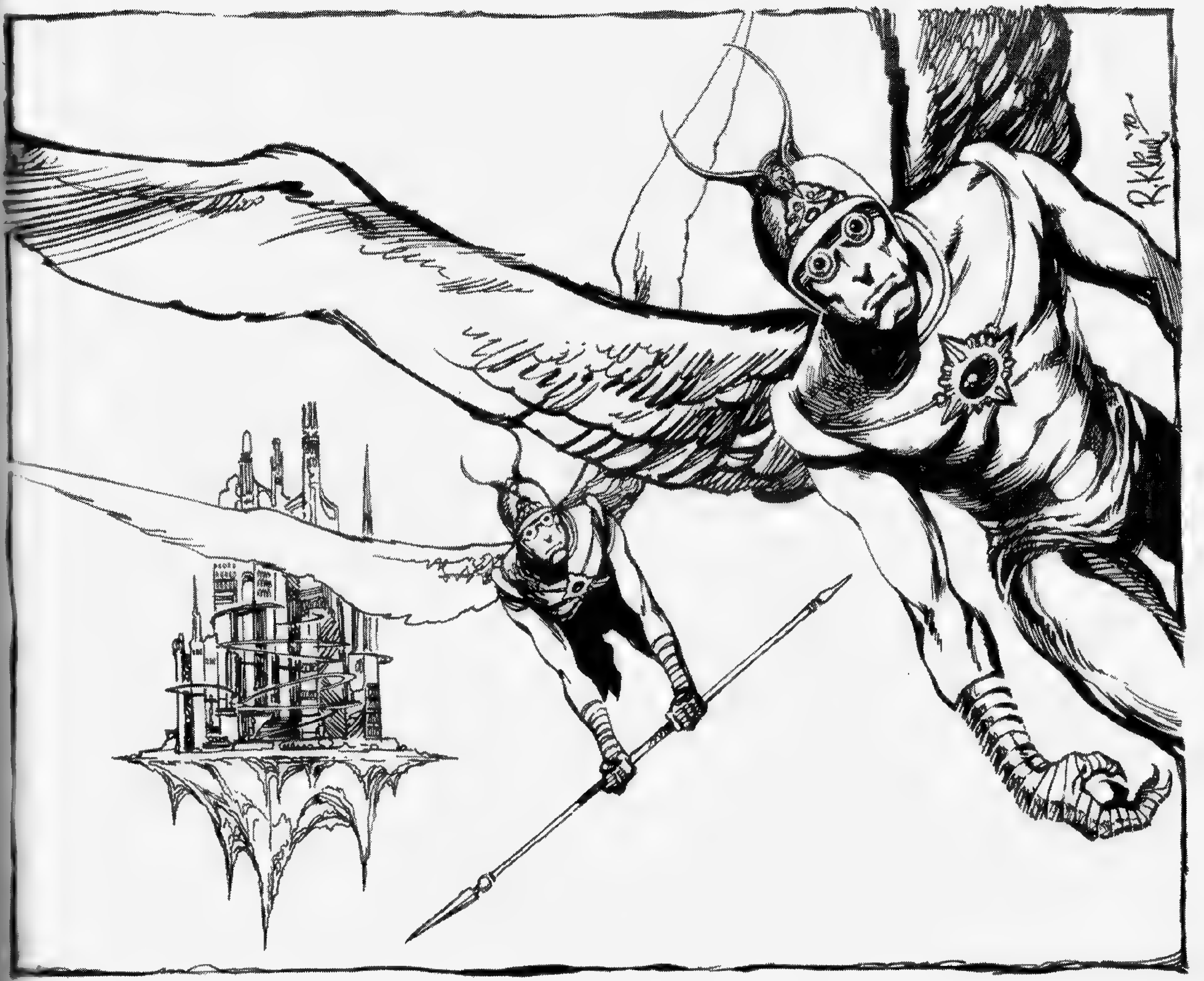
Chapter Five - "The Destroying Ray"

After the wall of water hits them, we see that our cast of characters still are standing. Back at Ming's laboratory, the Emperor says - "There may be a chance to save them, Zarkov!" Ming slowly walks across the lab to a huge generator apparatus that wasn't there last chapter. Ming - "This generates a ray which counteracts the magnetic power that holds the Shark palace under water." Then he orders - "Shut off all power in the laboratory!" He works the controls on the device. A beam of light moves up from the center of the generator, reaching towards the ceiling. On the viewscreen, we see a crater in which the Shark city was resting, as the city rises from the ocean floor. Ming turns off the machine and they all return to the screen. Zarkov - "The Shark palace is above water!"

It is interesting to note, that part of chapter 3 and all of chapter 4 and the first part of chapter 5 was deleted when Universal released the feature version "Rocketship", a condensed version of the serials.

Ming orders Torch to organize a rescue party to be sent to the Shark city. Meantime, our leads, Flash, Dale, Thun and Princess Aura, all sopping wet, leave the palace and enter a cave. That's right...a cave. You got me!? As Torch leads a detachment of soldiers through an underground tunnel, apparently leading to the Shark city, Zarkov sits before a view screen, we must assume, watching the rescue operations. Creeping stealthfully into the lab is a heavy set fella, who watches Zarkov intently. His outfit is patterned loosely after the one Barin wears in the comic strip. He steps out revealing himself to Zarkov. (shame on you Barin!) Barin explains that he is the real ruler of Mongo and that he was dethroned as a child, by Ming the Merciless, who killed his father. Barin - "A scientist of your genius can aid me in overthrowing Ming." Barin and Zarkov clasp hands and they leave the lab to rescue Flash and company. Moments later, in Barin's rocket, which is parked at the entrance of a cave, they blast off. These serial writers have really got a thing about caves, don't they.

Our cast emerge from a cave mouth and start down a rock strewn path that leads into a desolate level terrain. Nearby, winged Hawkmen are circling to land. Our heroes are on the way to Prince Thun's kingdom... a matter which they discussed while in the cave. Flash spies the Hawkmen and Aura explains that they are King Vultan's men and Thun adds that they are deadly enemies. They start to run for cover, but are jumped by the Hawkmen. Flash yells for Thun to take the girls to safety, as he grapples with the winged men. Thun takes off with the girls, but Aura drops behind and returns to watch her beloved Earthman. A good thing too, for Thun and Dale walk right into the clutches of more Hawkmen. Thun is knocked out, and he and Dale are borne skyward. At the same moment, Barin's rocket ship is landing in a nearby clearing. At the sight of reinforcements, the Hawkmen, fighting Flash, retreat. Zarkov



introduces Flash to Barin. Flash - "You came just in time! Aura, where's Dale?" Aura tells him that the Hawkmen have taken her and Thun away. Flash - "We've got to find them at once!" Aura - "No! There isn't a chance. King Vultan's palace is in the sky!" Barin - "My rocket ship is at your disposal." Against Aura's wishes, they rush to the rocket ship and with an explosion, take off to the rescue.

We now shift our attention to the beautiful Sky City of the Hawkmen, supported in the sky by beams of light. Under haloes of brightly lighted tubes, the beautiful Dale lies on a table. About her, stand Hawkmen. King Vultan comes forward to see how the reviving Dale is coming along. We are in a chamber off to the side of Vultan's majestic throne room. A Hawkman says - "She is recovering, Sire!" Vultan - "What has been done with the Lionman who was captured with her?" Hawkman - "Why, he was revived and sent to the atom-furnace, as your Majesty ordered." We are shown Thun, in the atom-furnace, as he and other slaves, stripped to the waist, shovel stuff into furnaces, as they are whiped by a Hawkman guard. And meantime our friends, who are rocketing toward the Sky City, are spotted by Hawkmen lookouts. One is sent to report to the king. On a balcony is a giant gun, that looks remarkably like a studio flood lamp. Hmmm. Back at the table, Dale breathes heavily and calls out for Flash. Vultan - "She calls for a Flash! We shall have to provide a Flash for her, if that's what she wants. HaHaHaHaHa!" Vultan is a jolly fat man, isn't he? Dale wakes up, and shook at the sight of this big bearded fat man with wings, runs for the door. But her way is barred by a guard. Oooh...has she got a nice body. Oh well...back tothe story. A soldier reports Barin's rocket and Vultan orders it destroyed with the melting ray, then he orders everyone from the throne room. Vultan - "Can't you see I'm busy?!" Do you love him gang?!

The men on the balcony receive their orders to destroy Barin's ship and proceed to do so. They turn the ray beam into the heavens searching out Barin's ship. The ship is bathed in the light. Barin - "The melting ray from Vultan's defence gun!...They're trying to destroy us!" Zarkov - "Then we're doomed!" Barin - "Certainly are, if the ray hits the ship!"

Back in the throne room, Vultan continues to chase Dale around the palace, chuckling all the while. He swaggers around...Dale gets more and more nervous. She stands in front of the throne, as he walks to the wall to the right of his throne, a duplicate of Raymond's drawing, where he pushes a button. A wall panel slides away, and a bear, covered with candy stripes emerges. Dale runs across the room and stands, back against the wall, watching as the bear comes closer, a ring in its nose.

Back in the rocket ship, things are getting hairier. They just can not escape that ray. Aura asks if there isn't any way they can escape it. Barin tells her the resisto force of their rocket ship is being neutralized by the ray. Incidentally, Barin's dialog here is dubbed in. Richard Alexander, his back to the camera, did not speak the dialog. It's a different voice. Wonder what he really said?

Her back to the wall, arms spread, Dale heaves her breasts and begs Vultan to take the bear away. Vultan ushers the bear back through the opening in the wall, giving it a swat on the rump as it passes by him. He steps forward...she breathes deeper. He comes closer and Dale looks as if she's really about to get it. The picture goes back as Vultan marches into the camera. Fade to the rocket ship, where Barin is struggling with the controls. All of a sudden there's an explosion at the front of the ship, we hear Aura scream, and the ship drops, falling through space. So episode 5 ends with Flash, Zarkov, Barin and Aura about to lose their lives, and Dale about to lose her virginity. Don't tell me

⑨ Zarkov, Barin, Aura and Flash on the rescue mission to free Dale and Thun from Vultan.

this first batch of serials was filmed for kids. We know that first Ming and now Vultan, want more than just holding hands with Dale.

Chapter six - "Flaming Torture"

The recap scenes of this chapter are in a quite different order than those ending the previous chapter. Right after the printed synopsis, we see Vultan, who laughing boistrously, is menacing Dale. He steps to the wall, and we have the bear bit. Dale screams, take him away. Cut to the ship, and this time while Barin gives his line about the risisto force being neutralized, we see a close shot of Aura, looking up adoringly into Flash's face. Last episode, it was a shot of the group standing at the front of the rocket, Barin seated at the controls. Hmmm! The light bathes the ship, there is the explosion, and it falls dramatically downward. The officer at the lamp orders another to report to Vultan that his orders have been carried out. The ship falls, Barin fights the controls, and it suddenly stops. Flash - "What happened Barin? What stopped the fall?" Barin - "We were saved by the gravity defying rays that support the Sky City!" Zarkov - "Then we're safe?" Barin - "As King Vultan's prisoners our chances are slim!"

Back in the throne room, Vultan ushers the bear through the wall entrance, slaps its butt, then walks menacingly toward the delicious Dale. I prefer this method of intergrating the old scenes with the new, but this is the only time they really do it, except when they're cheating their way out of last weeks cliff hanger. We'll see a lot of this in "Trip to Mars" and "Conquers the Universe".

Vultan tries to grab Dale, saying "Ahh, be reasonable!" He pulls her to him. As they struggle, they are interrupted by the soldiers that bring in the prisoners; Flash, Zarkov, Barin and Aura. Dale runs and throws her arms around the manacled Flash.

Flash and Barin are sentenced to the furnace rooms, Zarkov to Vultan's laboratory and Aura a prisoner, to keep her father, Ming, from attacking the Sky City. Meanwhile, Torch informs Ming they've found an injured Hawkman who tells them that Flash and the others have gone with Barin, in his rocket ship, to rescue Dale. Ming - "Where Vultan will no doubt compel the Earth-girl to marry him. It's a habit of his!" You should talk, Ming! Of Barin, he comments - "Barin, aye...I thought that trecherous pretender would interfere." Ming orders his rocket fleet prepared to fly to the Sky City to teach Vultan a needed lesson.

Back at the Sky City Zarkov is told his friends will continue feeding radium to the Atom furnaces until he discovers a new force to keep the Sky City aloft. Aura, in the meantime convinces Dale that the only way to save Flash's life is to convince Vultan that she loves him. She attempts this at a banquet that evening. Aura steps close to Vultan and tells him that the Earth-girl finds the men of Mongo more attractive than those of her own planet. Vultan is pleased at this. "My little doll!" He leans toward Dale and she shrinks away from his advances.

The scene changes to the furnace room, where Flash, Barin and Thun are feeding the Atom furnaces. Thun and some other skinny shell of a man turn a wheel that regulates the opening and closing of the massive furnace doors. Nearby, a Hawkman turns the large dials of what could be a giant clock, possibly a device also connected with the opening and closing of the furnace door. We mention it here, because it serves no purpose other than to suggest something is going on. It has no function. Perhaps it was inspired by the movie "Metropolis". Who can say. It looks good, but makes no sense. The skinny guy, working with Thun, falls to the floor unconscious. A Hawkman guard begins to whip him and Flash attacks. As the battle rages, an alarm sounds which Vultan hears in the banquet hall. Vultan arrives and restores order. Informed by the Captain of the guard, that Flash caused all the trouble, Vultan orders him to the Static Room! To test Dale's love for him, Vultan brings her to the Static Room, where she sees Flash hanging suspended between two poles. In front of him, large rods are coming together. As they meet, sparks explode all over the place. Flash is being electriouted. Dale screams. The rods meet again and sparks fly all over Flash's body. His body goes limp, and Flash is seemingly killed by the electrical current.

While almost all the events of the films are based on the events of the strip, they do not appear on the screen in the same order as in Raymond's narrative. In the strip, Dale decides on her own to try and save Flash by her wits...by pretending to prefer Vultan to Flash. In the strip, Zarkov shovels radium along with Barin, Thun and Flash. Princess Aura is not a hostage of Vultan, but a guest; there to seek her revenge on Flash for spurning her love. There is some involvement with Vultan's other wives, which is not used by the screen writers. We'll continue with the film version, and from time to time refer to its inspiration point from the colored Sunday page.

Chapter seven - "Shattering Doom"

Vultan, to test whether Dale loves him, instead of Flash, takes her to the Static Room, where Flash is being electrocuted. Dale screams - "Stop it - Stop it!" Flash has gone limp. Vultan - "So you do love the Earthman!" Dale - "No, but I can't bear to see him tortured!" Dale can stand it no longer, and she swoons. Vultan rushes forward to grab her, and he does...the old dog, by placing his left hand under her left breast. She is then taken away to the maids in waiting. Aura rushes forward, a ray pistol in her hand, and commands Vultan to release the Earthman. Vultan doesn't, but after Aura explains he'll never wid Dale's love if he kills Flash, he orders him brought down. Flash is ordered brought to the lab, where Zarkov will counteract the shock and save him. Zarkov has been busy, while all this was going on. He has discovered a new force to keep the Sky City aloft, but his exultation is interrupted by the arrival of Aura and the Hawkmen carrying the unconscious Flash. Zarkov saves Flash, by placing him in a device that resembles a hollow iron lung, its interior lined with circular neon tubes. Zarkov activates the machine and Flash's body is bathed in the light of the tubes. Aura - "Will he live?" Zarkov - "Yes..."

Back at the throne room, we find Dale and Vultan. She no longer wears the harem type white wedding outfit that showed her soft figure off to such good advantage. Her body is now covered, from head to toe, by a medieval type gown...but you can still tell how nice Jean Rogers was built. I'm sorry...my mind is wandering. Hoo Hah! Vultan, attempting to amuse Dale, proceeds to make shadow pictures with his hands on the wall. Man, this Vultan is a real card.

Flash is pulled from the stimulator, by Zarkov and Aura. Flash removes Aura's arms from about his neck, as he says - "I'm grateful to you for saving my life..." Aura - "I want more than your gratitude!" Now, you tell me, after the way she delivered that line, that this show was made for kids. Vavoom! Flash - "I'm an Earthman. Someday I hope to go back to my own planet, and if I do, Dale Arden goes with me!" Boy!, is Aura madder than hops, at these words. Flash turns to leave the laboratory. A guard yells - "Stop!" Flash stops, and turns back in the direction of Aura. She grabs an acetylene torch off Zarkov's desk and menaces Flash with it. Aura - "Promise me you'll never see Dale Arden again, or I swear by the Great God Tao you'll never see anything again!" Flash stares at her, refusing to say anything. She holds up the torch to his chest, as if about to raise it to his face...but his cold stare unhinges her. She drops it, and runs off, heartbroken. The guards try to take Flash back to the furnaces, but he escapes. Flash runs into the throne room to interrupt Vultan who is presenting Dale with a box of pretty jewels and baubles. He is promptly recaptured by Vultan's soldiers and returned to the furnace room. To prevent any more trouble from Flash, Zarkov is ordered to attach a wire to Flash's wrist and the other end to the furnace room control board. Flash is told that if he causes anymore trouble, a switch will be thrown, and he will be electrocuted instantly. As Zarkov leaves the furnace room, his eyes dart furtively, as if searching for something. Flash sullenly returns to work, now wired for electricity.

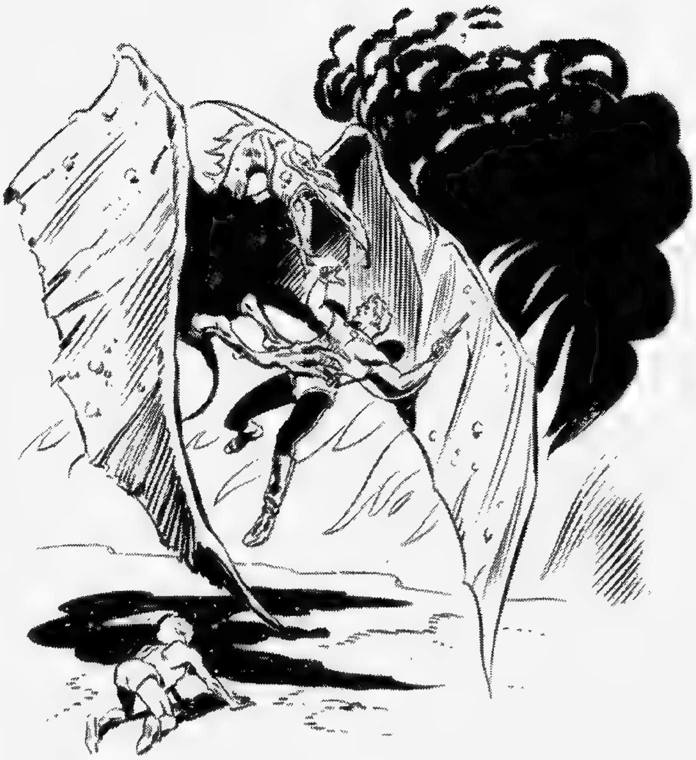
A tower sentry spies the approaching space fleet of Ming the Merciless. Vultan hears the alarm, as Princess Aura walks up to him and vows that now he will answer to her father for his defiance! Dale is ordered brought into the throne room.

Back at the furnace room, a shift change is called and Thun, Barin and Flash doggedly shuffel to sit and rest behind the short lead wall that is in the center of the furnace room. Out of sight of the guards, Zarkov sneaks into the room and creeps to Flash's side. He tells Barin to get a shovel. Zarkov - "I'm going to take this wire and attach it to the handle of a shovel..." Flash - "What for?" Zarkov - "When the time comes, you throw the shovel in the atom furnace. Remember...once you've thrown the shovel, your lives depend upon you reaching the shelter of this lead wall." Zarkov completes his work and sneaks back out of the room. The guards call for a shift change, so our heroes return to their work.

Again in the throne room, Ming and his retinue enter and march to Vultan's throne, where the Hawkman stands with the girls. Ming - "I come not for pleasure, but to punish!" Vultan - "Before your Majesty makes idle threats, you had better consider your position and your present surroundings!" At these words all the doors to the throne room open and in march Hawkmen carrying their ray rifles. Ming - "You dare to threaten your Emperor!" Vultan - "No-o-o...but perhaps we had better talk it over." To this point in the strip, Vultan has been a real son of a bitch...not the comic opera type heavy he's been so far on the screen.

In the furnace room, Flash holds his shovel so that it looks as if the wire is still attached to his wrist. At a moment when the guards aren't looking, Flash leans toward Barin, who is shoveling next to him and says - "Ready, Barin?" Barin - "Ready!" Flash and Barin throw their shovel loads into the furnace and Flash shouts (in a dubbed in voice track...it's not Crabbe) "Go for the wall, men!" Flash battles a guard with his shovel, while the others rush for the safety of the lead wall. Flash turns and throws his shovel into the furnace, as the door again opens. At the same instant a guard throws the switch which he believes will kill the troublemaker Flash. Flash, who is leaping over the 4' to 5' lead wall, is in mid-air as the shovel enters the furnace and the room is filled with a blinding explosion.

⑩ Flash assists the fallen wheel turner who has been getting whipped for falling down on the job.

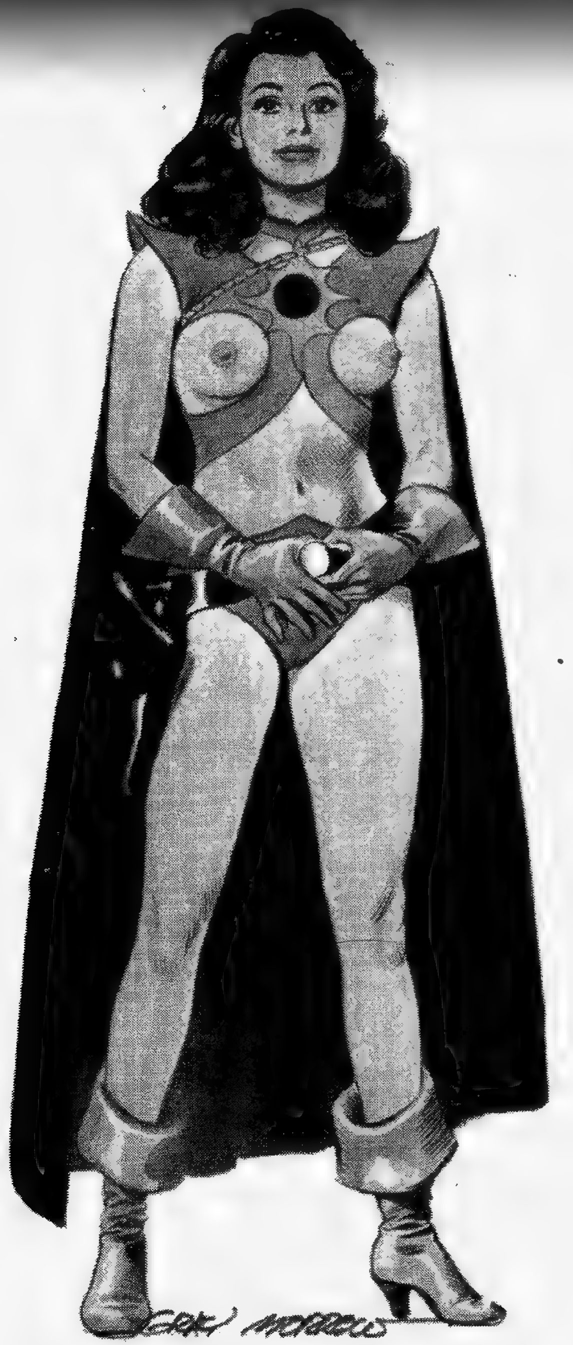


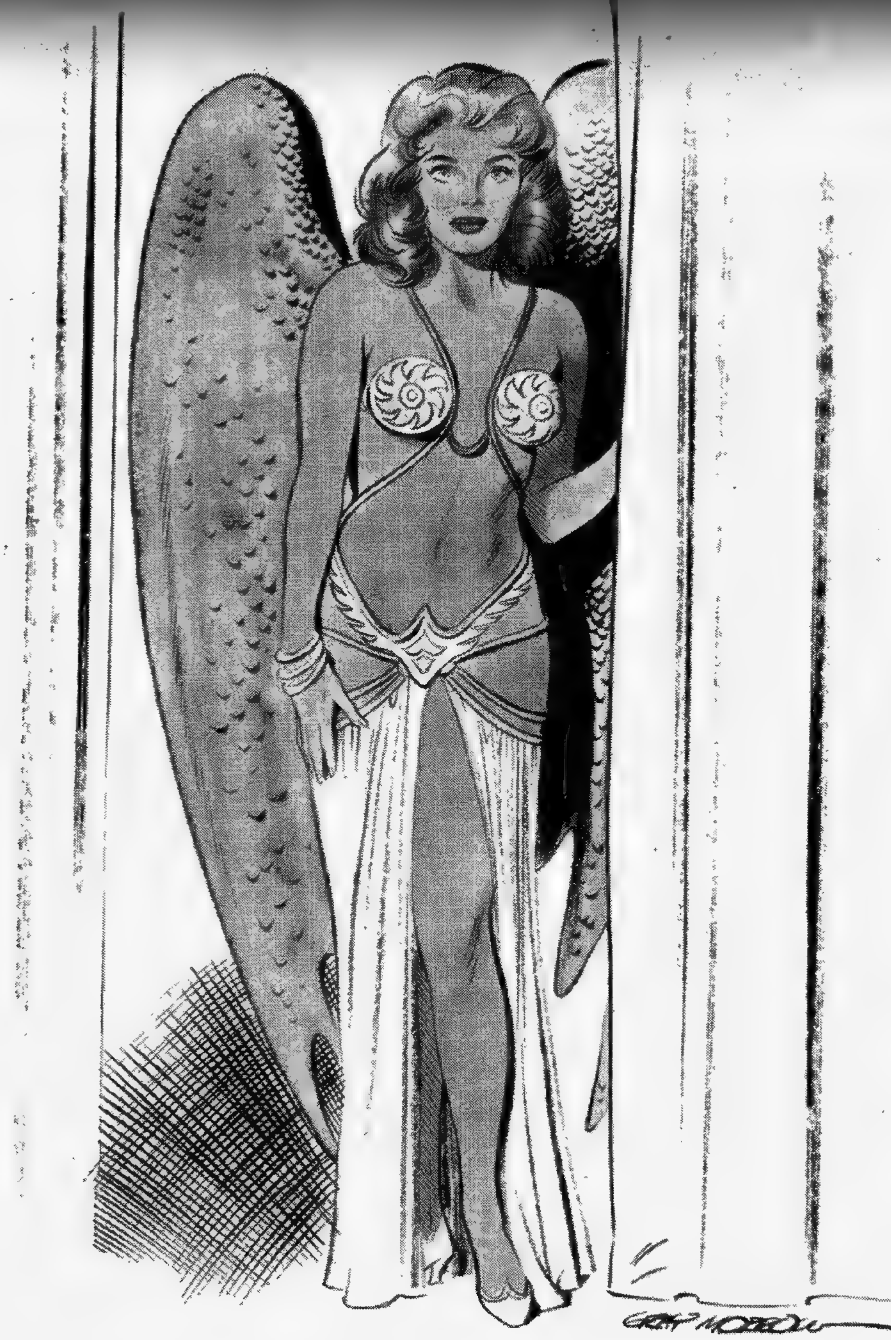
Chapter eight - "Tournament of Death"

Obviously, Flash has lept across the wall, to escape losing his life in the fantastic explosion that follows his hurling of the shovel into the atom furnace. He and his friends rush from the furnace room, as Flash yells they've got to get Dale. They burst into the throne room only to be captured again. Meanwhile, Barin has run to get Zarkov in the laboratory. Aura and Dale plead for Flash and Thun's lives to no avail. They are placed in front of the soldiers of Vultan, who take careful aim with their ray rifles. As they are about to fire, the palace suddenly begins to shake. There is chaos and confusion, and we see a long shot of the city as it begins to tip. Flash, with sword in hand, makes his way up to the throne, straight toward Vultan. At that moment, Zarkov rushes in shouting - "Stop...stop! The atom furnace has been destroyed! The beams which support the city are dying out, but I have discovered a new ray which will save the city!" Vultan orders the doctor to use it at once. Zarkov argees, on one condition...that his friends be given their liberty. Vultan promises, swearing by the Great God Tao. Zarkov returns to the lab and pushes a button on his device...and Gol-eee... all kinds of mad-lab things happen. Of course, the city returns to its normal position. Zarkov - "It's a success! My friends are now free!" Ming - "No! That promise shall not be kept!" Vultan - "I have sworn by Tao! My word is good!" Ming - "As Emperor of the Universe, it is my right to call a Tournament of Death...and the Earthman will have to enter it!" Vultan - "But if he survives, I hold you to his right - liberty, a kingdom of his own and the bride of his choice!" Ming - "Yes...Heh, if he survives!"

The Tournament of Mongo in the comic strip, is a beautiful lavish and barbaric happening, packed with violence and splendor. The serial makers plan their tournament too, but budget and size of cast dictates that some things will have to be changed. There'll be no hordes of armies of different races, no mammoth bowl-shaped arena, none of the romance and intrigue that catches Aura, Barin, Flash and Dale in its web, as can be found in the strip. But, that doesn't mean it can't still make the same statement...Granted, a bit simpler, but none the less, the same basic statement as the strip. Let's continue.

On film, Barin adds - "Do not forget, your Majesty, the same applies to anyone else forced into the tournament, and emerges victorious!" Vultan - "I will order the tournament to commence





at once!" It takes place in the area arena before Vultan's throne, in his palace.

The first event pits Flash against the mighty masked swordsman of Mongo; a large fellow, whose head is draped in a black hood. Of course, to anyone in the theater audience who has ever seen Prince Barin, they have a pretty good idea who he is. A very dull sword fight, which is over long, happens on the screen. As the supposidly furious fight goes on, everyone watching with concerted interest, Vultan asks Ming who the masked champion is. Ming tells him that he is the finest swordsman in all Mongo. After what seems like about two and a half days, Flash is able to catch the tip of his sword in the top of his opponents hood, unmasking him. Hold on folks...It's Prince Barin!!! Barin - "I'm sorry Flash...I was forced into this!" Flash - "I might of Killed you!" Vultan - "Clever trap, Ming. But the Earthman won!" Ming - "Yes...He won the right to fight the mighty beast of Mongo!" On his way to his chambers, Flash receives an explanation of why Barin entered the tournament. Barin hoped that he might wound Flash sufficiently to satisfy Ming, or that Flash would kill him, thereby ending his misery. Flash - "Misery?" Barin - "I love Princess Aura!" He exits. Thun cautions Flash that he will next fight a huge orangapoid...a beast that no man can conquer. Flash says he must fight it to save Dale. Flash reenters the arena, curtains at the far end of the room open, and there, in all its glory, is the sacred orangapoid...a giant ape with a rubber....oops...sharp horn on its forehead. Flash does such a double take, it's almost comical. The beast closes with Flash and it begins to look bad. The chapter ends with the beast bearing Flash to the floor. Dale screams...fade out.

One can only speculate. Is the orangapoid thrown in the serial, by the writers, to make up for leaving out all the other menaces of Raymond's tournament?

Chapter Nine - "Fighting the Fire-Dragon"

While Flash is apparently being overcome by the superior strength of the sacred horned orangapoid, Princess Aura has a hurried whispered conversation with the High Priest of Mongo. Aura - "Is there no way a man can conquer the sacred orangapoid?" Priest - "There is an ancient legend..." Aura - "Tell me!" Priest - "There is a white spot at the throat!" Princess Aura rushes across the throne room, grabs a spear from a startled guard, and runs into the arena area, where Flash is fighting for his life. Ming jumps to his feet yelling - "My daughter -! Get her out of there!" Vultan - "No! By your own laws, Ming, those who enter the arena must remain!" At Flash's side, the princess hands our hero the lance and whispers in his ear. Flash turns, and drives the spear into the throat of the hairy beast, that then slumps to the floor mortally wounded. Ming - "Someone betrayed the secret of how the orangapoid could be slain!" (turning to the High Priest) "As High Priest it is your duty to find the traitor! Death will be his punishment!" If only Ming knew he was addressing the very man who ratted to Princess Aura. Oh well.

The tournament has been won, but crafty Ming, saying the arena of death is hardly the place for a celebration, declares that the victors will receive their rewards three days thence, at his palace on feast day. As you recall, in chapter 8, when rewards of the Tournament of Death were announced, the rewards were freedom, a bride and a kingdom. However, the kingdom idea was left out in chapter 9. Obviously, the writers and producer, at this point, are faced with changing the locale of the adventures, adding whole new casts and armies, if they intend to follow Raymond's narrative. It becomes apparent to only use Raymond as inspiration, rather than a blueprint. As mentioned before, to retain audience identification and interest, from week to week, it was necessary to keep the cast of characters intimate. So, it is at this point, the strip and the films go their seperate ways. The latter only occassionaly borrowing items from the formers narrative and incorporating them into the film scenario.

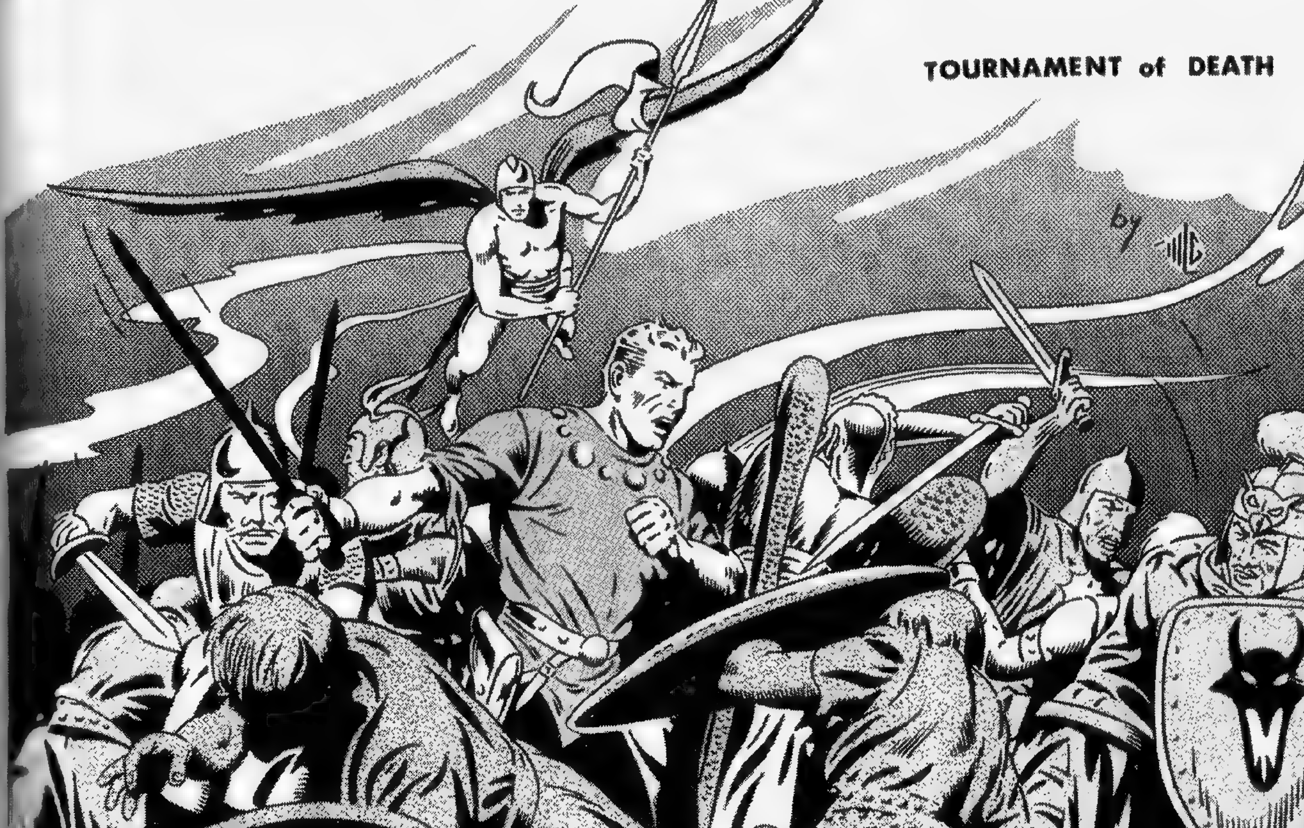
Back on film, Thun appologizes, but he is returning to his father's kingdom, not wishing to enter Ming's palace again. Flash and the bearded lionman shake hands, vowing to meet each other again. A scene quite easily inspired by that parting sequence between Flash and Barin in the strip.

We are now back on Mongo, and let's eavesdrop on part of a conversation between Ming and his High Priest. Ming - "Now that we're back in my own domain, I shall assume control of the situation!" In the lab, are Flash, Dale and Zarkov. The two men are confident that all is well, but Dale is worried, not trusting Ming. Dale wonders if the people on Earth can see them up there on Mongo.

At this point, let me point out that this is not the same laboratory set used in the opening episodes. It is smaller, and no longer high ceillinged as before. Why the change?

Zarkov assures Dale that he's positive they can, and that the sounds coming over the radio set he's sitting at are contact waves from the Earth. Zarkov vows he will not rest, until communication has been made.

Meantime, Ming and the High Priest continue to plot.

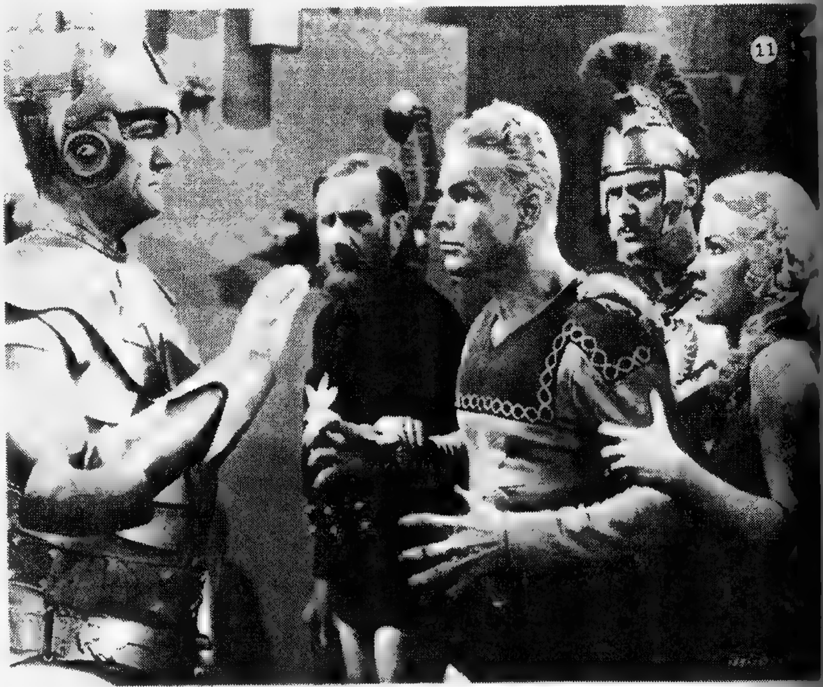


Priest - "Presents of King Vultan here complicates matters." Ming - "Vultan has very foolishly placed himself in my power. The Earthman Gordon must be removed... secretly and definately." Priest - "It shall be done, your Majesty!" Ming - "Remember, it is either he or you...the choice should not be difficult!"

The High Priest tricks Princess Aura into helping him. He tells her that she and Flash could live in happiness in the Sacred Palace of Tau. All she would have to do is drug Flash and bring him to the Tunnel of Terror. There, she would administer a second drug that would erase all memory of the past. When Flash awoke, the first face he would see would be Aura's. (Editorial Comment - And her 40" bust) Aura comments that the Fire Monster, that guards the Tunnel of Terror, would never let them pass to the Sacred Palace. Priest - "At the mystic hour of midnight, the Fire Monster will be fast asleep, and nothing but the sacred gong can arouse him. I promise you the gong will not ring!" It's written all over Aura's face... at last she will possess the man she wants more than anything else in the world. She agrees! (Note - The fire breathing dragon must be the brother of the dragon Thun killed in the Tunnel of Terror back in chapter three. That Tunnel of Terror leads to a lot of different places. Huh, gang!)

The plan works. Barin and Flash drink drugged wine, that they think King Vultan has sent them. As both men sleep, Aura and her soldiers slip into the room and spirit the unconscious Flash away on a stretcher. A short time later, Zarkov finds the unconscious Barin and after reviving him, realize they are victims of a trick. Suspecting Princess Aura of this treachery, Zarkov, Barin, Vultan and Dale set out to find her. At her apartment, they find the fellow who delivered the drugged wine and force information from him.

(11) Officer Torch - "Obey...or your friends die with you!" Dr. Zarkov - "Easy boy...Stand here!" Meaning the metal panel in the background, from which he will make Flash invisible.



At the Tunnel of Terror, Aura has administered the second drug and is about to enter the tunnel, when a soldier rushes up warning that Prince Barin and the others are on the way. The High Priest exclaims that if the Earthman is rescued, his head will be forfeited. Aura and her Flash-bearers rush into the smoke filled tunnel...but the dirty High Priest turns and strikes the gong. It awakes the terrible fire breathing dragon, that lumbers forth from the smoke filled recesses of the cavern. The soldiers run in stark terror and Aura screams. Aura - "You traitor! You've destroyed Flash Gordon!" Priest - "I have obeyed my Emperor!" As Barin and the others rush into the entrance, they see the dragon about to destroy Flash with its lethal bad breath.

Chapter ten - "The Unseen Peril"

Well, it looks like the High Priest has successfully carried out the orders of his Emperor...to rid Mongo of the Earthman! After castigating the High Priest for his treachery, Aura rushes back into the tunnel to stand beside her beloved. Zarkov yells - "I'll destroy it with this grenade!" and with that, the clever scientist pulls a grenade from his belt and throws it full into the yawning mouth of the hideous fire-dragon. Now you know why they call the good doctor a genius. It isn't every scients who is prepared for every eventuality as he is...a grenade, no less. Anyway, the expected happens. When grenade and the hot breath of a fire breathing dragon come together, it spells bad news for fire dragons, in anybody's book! Priest - "Sacrilege... You've killed the Fire Dragon that guards the Sacred Palace of the Great God Tao!" He curses Zarkov. Zarkov inspects the still form of his young friend. Dale looks at Zarkov, her eyes pleading for some kind of good news. Zarkov tells her that Flash has been given a powerful drug and that he can revive him, but isn't sure he can destroy the effects of the drug. Boy, does Dale sneer at Princess Aura, who stands, her head held high, contemptious of the others. Fade out. Later, in the throne room of Emperor Ming, we learn that Zarkov failed to destroy the effects of the drug. When Flash is to choose his bride, he states that he does not wish to choose a bride among strangers. He recognizes no one! King Vultan protests and accuses the High Priest and Aura of being responsable for Flash's condition. Ming orders Vultan taken away to the dungeons.

The only similarity between this portion of the film and the strip, was on May 5, 1935. After being captured by Queen Azura, queen of the Blue Magic Men, Flash drinks Lethium, and loses him memory. Flash does not recognize Dale or any of his other friends (5-12-35) and instead vows his loyalty and love to Azura.

On film, Zarkov at work in the laboratory, is interrupted by Barin who bursts in informing the doctor that Flash had been given the drops of forgetfulness and had gone away with Princess Aura. He also explains that Vultan protested and was imprisoned by Ming. Zarkov - "Bring Flash here, at once. I can counteract the effects of the drug!" Barin - "I doubt if he'll come. He knows none of his friends!" Zarkov - "Get him away from the princess! I will prepare for his safety, and go to you at once!" When Barin tries to get Flash to leave with him, Aura tells Flash that Barin is someone come to harm her. Heroic protector that he is, Flash jumps to his feet, sword drawn and attacks. While the battle rages, Aura nervously makes her way to an avenue of escape from the apartment. As the two men exchange blows, Zarkov comes in through the door, grabs Flash from behind and shouts for Barin to knock Flash out! The prince does, with the hilt of his sword. I guess Zarkov didn't want to see another 12 day boring fight between Flash and Barin again, so soon after the other dud. Ohhh...Michael Curtiz, where are you!

Aura has escaped, and our heroes rush, with the unconcious Flash, to the laboratory; hoping to get there before Aura warns Ming.

Entering the lab, Zarkov instructs Dale to lock the door after them, which she does! Zarkov then proceeds to restore Flash's memory, with a strange machine he lowers from the ceiling. Remember how at the opening of this episode, Zarkov wasn't sure he could destroy the effects of the drug? Well, as you can see, science never sleeps, or at least writers don't pay attention to what they've written, or...Hmmm. The process succeeds and Flash's memory is returned. However, Ming has sent Torch and his men to Zarkov's lab to kill Flash and they arrive at just this moment. Torch opens the door and he and his men march into the room, to stand before Flash, Dale, Zarkov and Barin. By the way, this was the door locked (?) by Dale. Flash starts to grapple with Torch, but is restrained by Zarkov, who asks Flash to stand against a large metal panel on the wall. Torch orders his men to shoot, but before that can happen, Zarkov, smiling, flips a switch on a control board and before the astonished eyes of everyone, accompanied by a scream from Dale, Flash disappears from sight!

Again the only connection between this and the strip happens on July 14, 1935. In the strip, Flash regains his memory, when Dale and Zarkov, who are laboring in Azura's kitchens, discover Lethium is being put into Flash's drink and keep him from partaking of it. Warned by Dale, Flash forces Azura to drink the drug of forgetfulness and shortly thereafter he regains his memory. It is now Azura who can remember nothing.

Chapter Eleven - "In the claws of the Tigron"

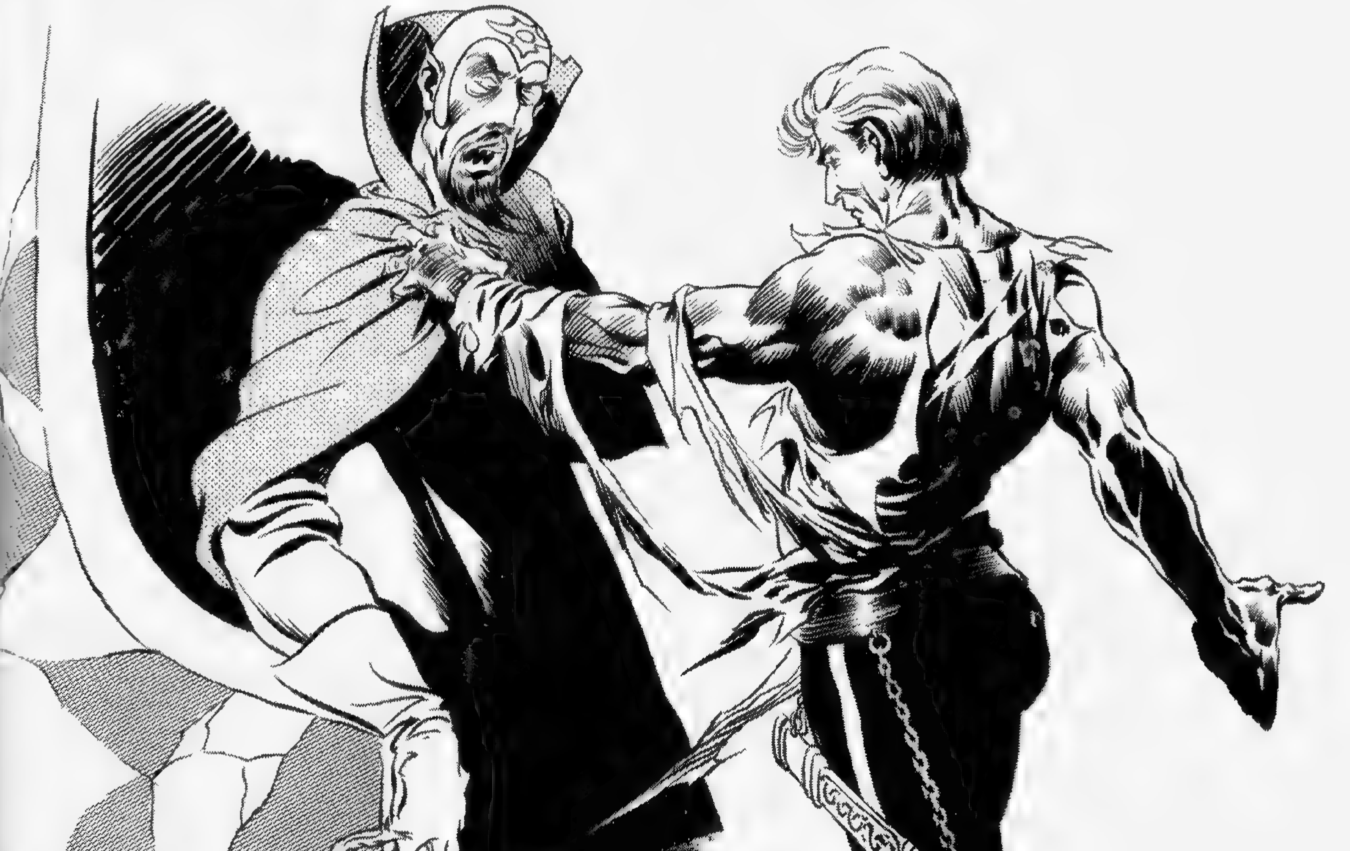
At the sight of the disappearing Flash, the guards jump back, and in a panic they rush from the laboratory. Dale and Barin soon discover from Zarkov that it was he who made Flash disappear. Zarkov explains that he's discovered a ray that will render a human being invisible. Comforting Dale, that Flash still has plenty of life left in him, the doctor reverses the process, bringing Flash back to visibility. Zarkov further explains that as yet he knows not how long the invisible person may remain so, but against the pleas of Dale, Flash convinces Zarkov to again render him invisible, so that he may pay a visit to Ming unseen. Once again, Flash is made invisible, and we see the door of the lab open and close, as if by magic, as the invisible Earthman exits.

In his throne room, Ming is receiving an excited report from Torch and his men about Flash Gordon. Ming - "You expect me to believe this impossible tale?!" Torch - "I speak the truth, your Majesty! My men will bear me out in this!" Ming - "Bring in Flash Gordon, dead or alive! If you fail, your life will be forfeited!" All of a sudden, Ming is violently thrown back in his throne, clutching desperately at his throat. Flash - "Flash Gordon is here, your Majesty, and very much alive! Unless you release my friends, this is only a sample of what's in store for you!" Ming's soldiers try to find the invisible menace to no avail. Flash - "I could take your worthless life, Ming...but because of your daughter, Prince Barin asks that your life be spared!" Ming (having been released) - "Don't let 'em escape! Guard the door!" The soldiers rush to do so, but the invisible Flash is too much for them. Unable to lay their hands on him, Flash tosses them violently about. The invisable Flash yells up to Ming, from near the doorway. Flash - "I warn you Ming - this is only a sample! Keep your hands off my friends! I shall be watching you always!" We see the large door of the throne room close behind him.

In the comic strip, Flash also becomes invisible, but under different circumstances. Queen Azura has regained the throne Flash has wrested from her, and Flash, Zarkov and Dale are forced to flee the capitol city of this underground kingdom. While Azura's men search for them, Zarkov spends two days and nights completing his light machine with which he makes Flash invisible. (8-11-35) Casting only a shadow, which fills Azura's men with stark terror, Flash pays a visit to Azura at her palace, where he kidnaps the queen. Ultimately, she will become his ally against Ming.

Back on film, Ming realizes that Flash's invisibility is a result of Zarkov's work in Ming's own lab. Ming declares the machine must be destroyed, but Aura adds - "But not until the Earthman has again become visible!" Ming angered - "I've preserved the life of this Earthman long enough, because of your whims! Now I -" Aura stops him by pointing out that Ming can not fight a man that can't be seen. She convinces her father to leave them in the lab and that, with the help of a guard, she will find some way to overhear their conversation.

Meantime, down in the dungeons, the invisible Flash has released Vultan, by scaring the guards out of their wits. He and Vultan then return to the lab, where Zarkov, Barin and Dale are waiting. United again, the doctor tells them they must prepare their rocket ship for flight to Vultan's sky city and from there to the Earth. However, first the doctor once



again attempts to communicate with the planet Earth. This time Zarkov is successful. He explains to Prof. Gordon that they have very little sending power left, but they are making preparations to take flight from Mongo to return to Earth. The scientists on Earth are elated to find out that Flash is alive and that Zarkov has conquered space. Communication is again lost. Invisible Flash, Vultan and Zarkov load the rocket ship, while Barin and Dale guard the invisibility machine. The invisibility machine must be guarded, because Zarkov has pointed out that if anything happens to it, he doesn't know how he can bring Flash back to visibility. Princess Aura and a fruity-eyed soldier listen to everything from a narrow inner wall beyond the lab. To do this, they use a listening device dropped down the inside wall of the lab, from a small secret opening in the ceiling. Barin spots the device and takes Dale to safety in the catacombs under the palace.

The fruity-eyed soldier reports to Ming and Ming orders a strong body of soldiers to the lab. Just then Aura arrives and tells her father that she will find Dale Arden for him, but he is not to touch the invisibility machine until Flash has again become visible. She leaves and the crafty Emperor instructs Torch to destroy Flash Gordon instantly where ever they find him.

Princess Aura instructs the mistress of the Sacred Tigron to assist her in locating Dale in the myriad of caverns beneath the palace. The Tigron can follow a trail anywhere, so supplying the girl with one of Dale's sandals, so the Tigron can get her scent, they set out upon their search.

Meantime, Zarkov, Vultan and the invisible Flash return to the lab to discover that Dale and Barin have disappeared. As they ponder the fate of their friends, Torch and his soldiers march into the lab demanding to know the whereabouts of Flash Gordon. Flash - "Here I am!" and Torch drops to his knees, fighting the invisible hands that clutch at his throat. Before our eyes, we see Flash become visible, in a very nice piece of trick photography. Apparently the effects of the ray have worn off. Flash throws Torch to the floor and turns to see Prince Barin running into the lab. Barin explains to Flash what he has done with Dale, and leaving Vultan and Zarkov to fight the soldiers, the two leave to fetch her from the cave. In that very same cave, Princess Aura and the other chick, come ever closer to Dale. The Tigron tears loose and bounds down the corridor, followed by the running girl and princess. The Tigron spots Dale and springs upon her, bearing her to the ground. Fade out.

Chapter twelve - "Trapped in the Turret"

As the Tigron bears Dale to the ground, Flash and Barin rush into the cave where the Earthgirl is being mauled. (Which, by some miracle leaves not one scratch on her body.) Flash leaps into the cave, and heroically grapples with the Tigron. The fight is not long, and Flash breaks the cat's neck with a full nelson.

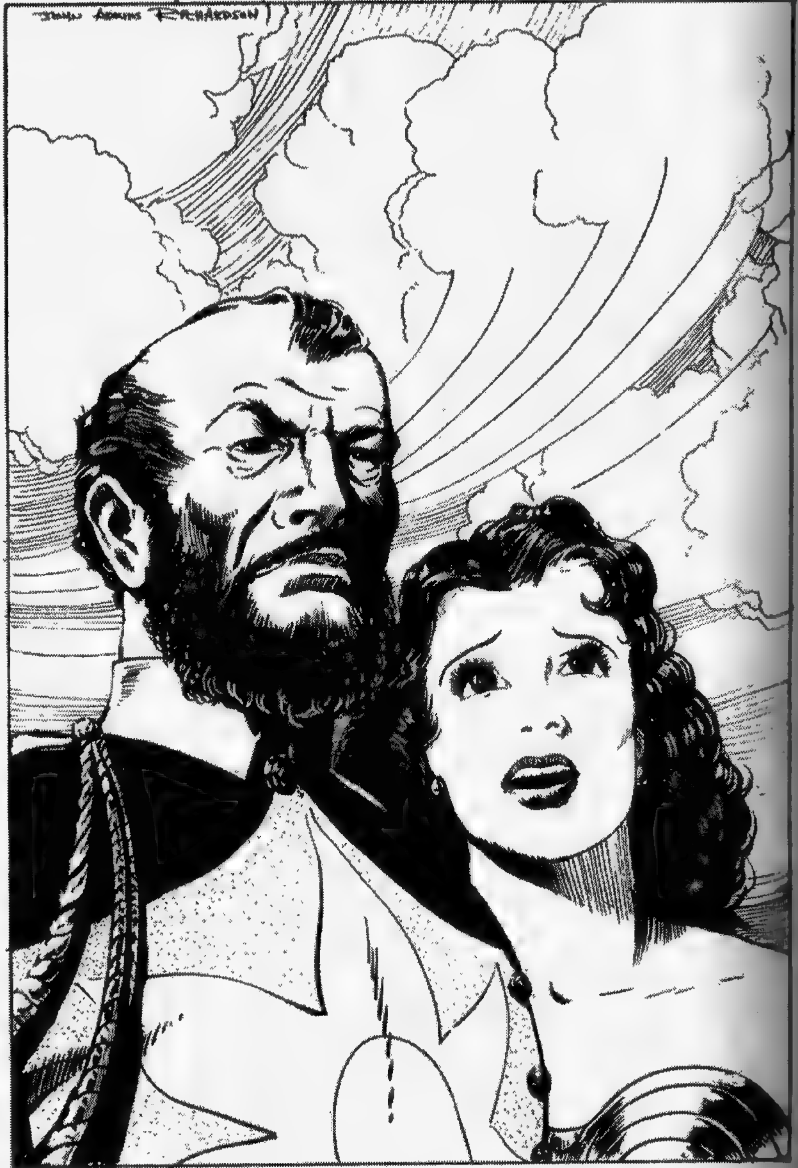
It might be interesting to point out that Flash kills a Tigron in a similar fashion on Sunday page 6-3-34 and Raymond has Flash breaking the neck of a Terrot in this same manner, Dec. 25, 1938.

Flash - "I guess I got here just in time!" Princess Aura watches as Flash and Dale stand in a gentle embrace. Barin steps close to the princess. Barin - "Princess Aura...why did you do this?" Aura - "I'm not accountable to you for my actions, Prince Barin!" Barin - "You do not hope to win the regard of Flash Gordon by destroying the woman he loves! I've won the friendship of the Earth people by helping them...you should do the same!" Aura contemplates the wisdom of Prince Barin's words. She says - "Alright...we'll help them!" Hey...How about this change in character in Aura? After 11 episodes of lusting after Flash's body, she does this about-face and allies herself with Barin to help the Earth people...to win Flash's "regard", as Barin puts it. Oh well...that's women for you. From lust to regard. Incredulous as it seems, Dale and Flash accept this change in Aura's character!

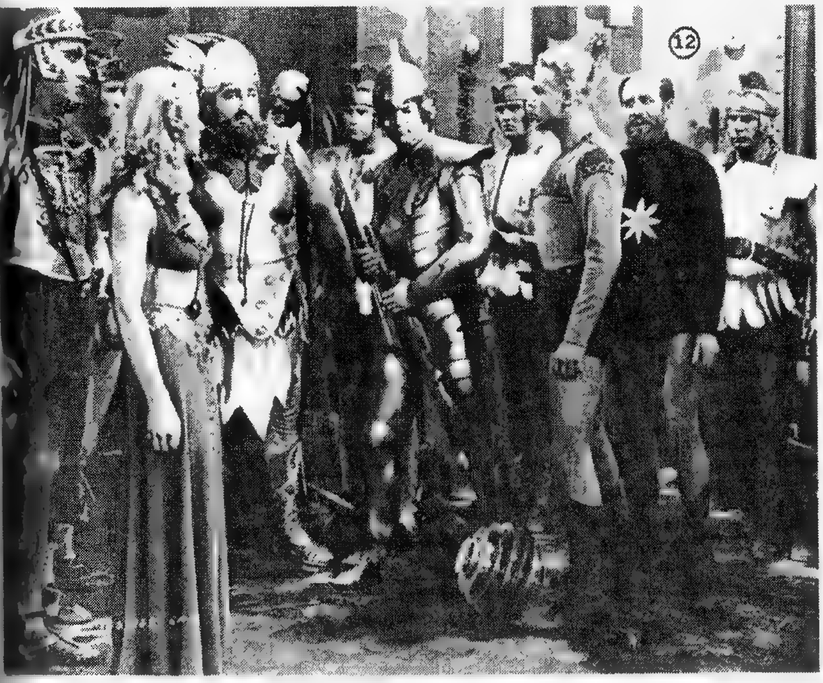
Back at the lab, Torch and his men have taken Zarkov and Vultan prisoner. Torch informs Zarkov that Ming is prepared to overlook the doctor's recent actions if he will divulge the secret of the invisibility machine. Zarkov refuses.

Meantime, Aura assures her friends (?) that she will intercede with her father, the Emperor. They set out for the throne room. As they enter, Ming shouts - "Seize them!" Barin, sword drawn, orders Ming to tell his men to withdraw. He tells Ming that if it wasn't for the love he has for Aura, he would kill him. Ming addressing Aura - "I'm delighted to learn that you look with favor upon Prince Barin! I see no reason why we should not live in peace until such time as the Earth people return to their own sphere!" While Ming is having his forced change of heart, Torch has returned to the lab where he orders the invisibility machine destroyed. Zarkov protests, but to no avail.

Meantime, Barin orders Ming to proclaim the Earth people free at once. He does so and Flash is told he can go to the laboratory and inform Zarkov of his freedom. At the lab, Flash and Dale find Zarkov upset because his invisibility machine has been destroyed. Having been informed by Flash that they're free and confirmed by the guard that escorted Dale and Flash, the soldiers leave Zarkov, Vultan, Flash and Dale alone. (if you can call that alone) Not trusting Ming, our heroes decide to leave for Vultan's sky city as soon as possible. Barin and Aura arrive to inquire if the Earth people are not pleased with their new found freedom. Of course our friends are happy, but skeptical. Barin says he's sure Ming is sincere in his wish to be rid of Flash and the others. Flash - "You're right, there! But it's how he wants to get rid of us that concerns me!" Barin tells them he will prepare his rocket ship for flight at once! Vultan - "Our departure must remain secret!" Barin agrees to meet them with his ship outside the palace walls. The place...the turret house at the lake of rocks.
While Barin loads his rocket ship, Ming's spies overhear him telling a companion (who is only here this one moment, so that Barin can be overheard, by someone



⑫ Flash and Dale return to the lab where they inform Zarkov and Vultan of their freedom. Torch has just wrecked the invisibility machine.



speaking aloud) where he will meet the others.

Back at the lab, Flash and Zarkov communicate with Prince Thun of the Lionmen, on their space-o-graph. They instruct their bearded friend to meet them at Vultan's palace, but as you will see next episode, he gets lost somewhere on the way, and goes the wrong way.

We now see Barin's rocket ship rise from its resting place and take to the air. Next Flash, Dale, Zarkov, Aura and Vultan emerge from a cave opening into the sea of rocks, which is a large clearing in mountainous country. The ground is covered by boulders, lying here and there...the sea of rocks...clever? Across the rock strewn clearing is the mouth of another cave, in which can be seen steel rivited doors. As our heroes head toward it, they see an approaching rocket ship. Flash says it must be Barin's ship. The ship flies lower and fires upon them. All wonder why Barin would do that. They have no time to ponder the matter, for the ship again fires upon them. They open the doors of the turret house and rush inside. The ship fires again. It's blast hits the doors, and there follows a great explosion. We are left with the impression that our heroes have been blown to smithereens.

Chapter thirteen - "Rocketing to Earth"

The door of the turret house is blown to slivers. Flash asks Aura if there is any other way out of the place. Aura - "Yes...the trap door!" And sure enough, they're standing on a trap door. Talk about lucky - lu-leee! Our friends just make it in, as another blast destroys the interior of the turret house.

King has been watching, on his space-o-graph, and as the last shell explodes in the cave, he turns off his viewscreen and turns to Prince Barin, who is restrained by guards. Ming - "That finishes Flash Gordon and his friends!" Barin - "You murderer!" Ming - "Put him in the dungeon!" and Barin is taken away. Well, at least we know that Prince Barin wasn't in that rocket ship.

King Vultan is slightly injured by the last explosion and Zarkov urges that they get to the lab fast, so he may care for the hawkman properly. On their way to the lab they come upon the guards escourting Barin to the dungeons. Aura - "Why, it's Prince Barin!...A prisoner!" Flash - "So he wasn't in the rocket ship, after all!" They hide and ambush the guards. Flash and Barin make quick work of the soldiers and again Zarkov urges speed in getting Vultan to the lab. A guard, faking unconsciousness, overhears this and as our heroes rush off, gets to his feet and reports to Ming.

Our heroes arrive at the lab. Vultan warns Zarkov, who is draping a cloth on the hawkman's head, to hurry, for Ming is sure to atack them. However, Zarkov is not worried. He notes that he came to the lab for he can find means to defend them here.

Upon receiving the report of our heroes escape, Ming orders that they be captured at once. Torch leads a detachment of soldiers to the lab, but is unable to enter due to Zarkov's wiring of the door. When the door is touched, it is covered with sparks. Ming arrives at the door, followed by more soldiers. After a futile attempt to open the door with a ray-gun, Ming orders a soldier to cut off the power that supplies electric energy to the lab.

In the lab, Zarkov boasts - "We can hold out indefinately!" But...Oh, Oh...the doctor turns his switch on and nothing happens. He realizes the electric energy has been cut off. Outside, Ming commands that the door be destroyed and that the lab's occupants be taken prisoner. Suddenly an alarm siren sounds. Ming - "An air attack!" Ming leaves to return to his throne room to investigate the alarm.

Inside the lab, our heroes rush to the space-o-graph and see an air attack by the gyro ships of the lionmen. I told you Thun would go the wrong way. Lucky break for our friends, huh?

Ming, watching the gyro ships on his throne room space-o-graph orders his fleet out to meet the attack; then he orders a soldier to have the prisoners in the lab brought to the throne room. Without the electricity in the door, this is accomplished quite easily. Aura - "Your Majesty dares to have guards lay hands upon me!" Ming - "You have chosen to consort with traitors... you shall share their fate!" However, Flash points out to Ming that it is his ships that are being shot down from the skies. Ming vows that if he loses, Flash and his friends will never live to see it. Ming - "Take the prisoners to the Tunnel of Terror!" Before this can be done, the doors of the throne room are flung open and the room is filled with ferocious fighting bearded lionmen. Flash and Barin join in the battle. Ming, realizing all is lost, makes his escape down a flight of stone steps beyond the space-o-graph. Flash, Thun and Barin, noticing his escape, take out in pursuit of the escaping monarch of Mongo. They are followed by Princess Aura.

Underground, in a tunnel, we see Ming whispering to the High Priest. The Priest bows, and Ming turns and runs toward massive wooden doors. He stands before the doors, his arms outstretched above his head, as one in prayer. The Priest pushes on a long handle and the doors open, revealing a smoke and mist filled tunnel beyond. (Say...We've seen this place before.) Ming bows his head and walks slowly into the billowing clouds of smoke, as the High Priest watches. Ming, his arms outstretched, starts up a short flight of steps that are barely visible through the smoke. As he disappears into the smoke, the High Priest pulls back on the handle and the doors return to a closed position.

At that selfsame moment, Flash rushes up to the Priest demanding to know where Ming is. High Priest - "The Emperor Ming is dead! The Emperor entered the Sacred Palace of the Great God Tao, from which no man returns!" Aura, who has just joined Flash, Barin and Thun is comforted on the loss of her father, by Barin. Flash says there's nothing more that can be done here, so they all return to the palace.

Later, in the throne room, Princess Aura, dressed in a revealing regal gown, sits in the throne once occupied by her late father. To her side stands her royal consort, Prince Barin. Flash, Dale and Zarkov march up to the throne, while soldiers line the way with their raised swords, amid the sounds of trumpets. A royal salute to the heroes from Earth.

One would think our heroes troubles would be over. Not so, for a short time after Flash, Dale and Zarkov blast off for Earth, it is discovered that the High Priest has placed a bomb aboard their rocket ship. A radio warning from Barin, comes just in time. Flash finds the bomb, resting on the shelf of the ship's generator unit and drops it out of the rocket's door. It explodes hamlessly in space. Back at the ship's radio set, Flash thanks Barin and says - "We're safe and on our way!"

Our heroes, in radio contact with Earth, ask that all electrical power that may counteract theirs be killed. As generators shut down, thousands of people fill the streets to watch for Zarkov's rocket.

In the ship, as they near the cloud cover of Earth, Zarkov exclaims - "Flash...Dale...We've won! We made it! We're about to land!" Zarkov stops...Our young couple do not hear him. Flash takes Dale in his arms and kisses her, in a tender embrace. How 'bout that! After 13 episodes, they finally get to kiss. Oh well!

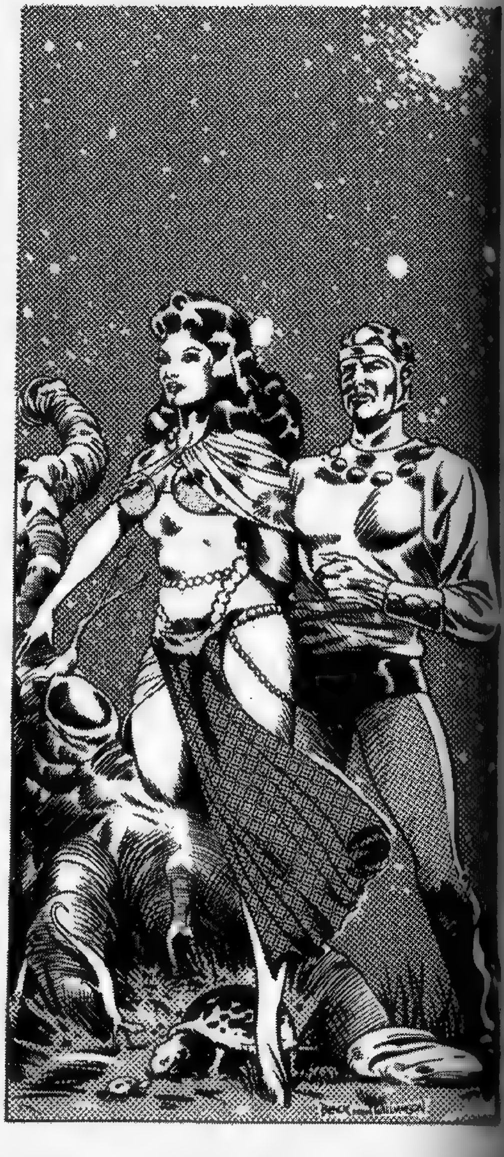
As for the Flash of the comic page, it will be a few more years before he returns to Earth.

2nd SERIAL

FLASH GORDON'S

Trip to Mars -

by MIKE ROYER and Cosgrove & Greim



The second of the Flash Gordon serials came out in 1938. However, because of a radio broadcast, Flash's adventures took place on Mars rather than on Mongo.

The famous Orson Welles broadcast of "War of the Worlds", that frightened the nation in the fall of 1938, caused great interest in the planet Mars. Universal Pictures capitalized on this Martian interest, by having Flash's adventures take place on Mars.

Universal Pictures Co. Inc. presents..."Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars".

A 15 part serial produced for Universal by Barney Sarecky and directed by Ford Beebe and Robert Hill.

Cast of Characters:

FLASH GORDON - Larry "Buster" Crabbe, DALE ARDEN - Jean Rogers, MING - Charles Middleton, DR. ZARKOV - Frank Shannon, HAPPY HAPGOOD - Donald Kerr, AZURA - Beatrice Roberts, CLAY KING - Montague Shaw (Dr. Huer in Buck Roggers), PRINCE BARIN - Richard Alexander.

List of Chapters:

1. New Worlds to Conquer 2. The Living Dead 3. Queen of Magic 4. Ancient Enemies 5. The Boomerang 6. Tree-Men of Mars 7. Prisoner of Mongo 8. The Black Sapphire of Kalu 9. Symbol of Death 10. Incense of Forgetfulness 11. Human Bait 12. Ming the Merciless 13. The Miracle of Magic 14. A Beast at Bay 15. An Eye For An Eye.

As "Trip to Mars" opens, it picks up the story from where the first serial left off. Flash, Dale and Zarkov are returning to Earth in their rocket, after an exciting adventure on the planet Mongo. Their rocket noses down in an irate farmer's melon patch and from the farmer's complaints, the trio know they have landed in the United States.

It is not long, however, before a new danger threatens. Riding a strange light ray to Earth, two giant headed Martians land on our hapless planet, placing a strange smoking device in the surface of the Earth before dying in the denser atmosphere. Back on Mars, the evil Ming the Merciless, Emperor of the planet Mongo, watches with glee. His new found ally, Queen Azura of Mars, is less than pleased, however, at the death of two of her most loyal soldiers.

The effects of Ming's device are not long in manifesting themselves. Across the screen flashes scene after scene of fire, flood, and disaster. In otherwords, Universal throws in a gob of newsreel clippings of disasters.

At a national conference of scientists, convened by the President, the nation's top brains are unable to agree on the cause or cure for the disasters. Dr. Metz scoffs at the sundry theories and trumpets the doom of all mankind. He also notes the absence of Dr. Zarkov, and inspires reporter Happy Hapgood to seek out Flash and the good doctor. Hapgood meets with success, but receives a frosty welcome from Flash and his friends, who refuse to grant him an interview.

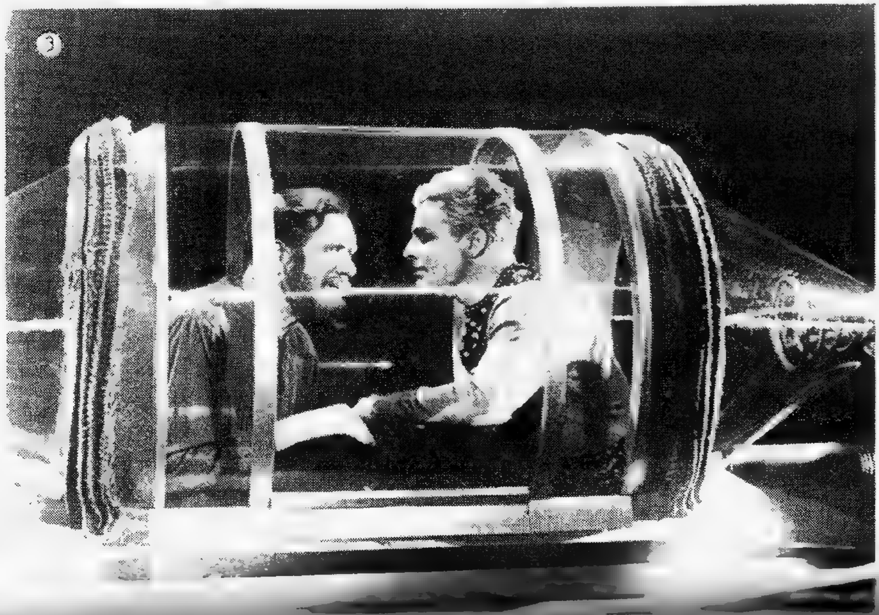
Zarkov has determined that the beams causing the destruction of Earth are emanating from the planet Mongo, and so, once again, our intrepid heroes head for Alex Raymond's mythical planet. In space, not only does Zarkov discover that he has erred by some nine zillion miles, and that the rays are really coming from the red planet Mars, but Flash unearths a stow-away...reporter Happy Hapgood.

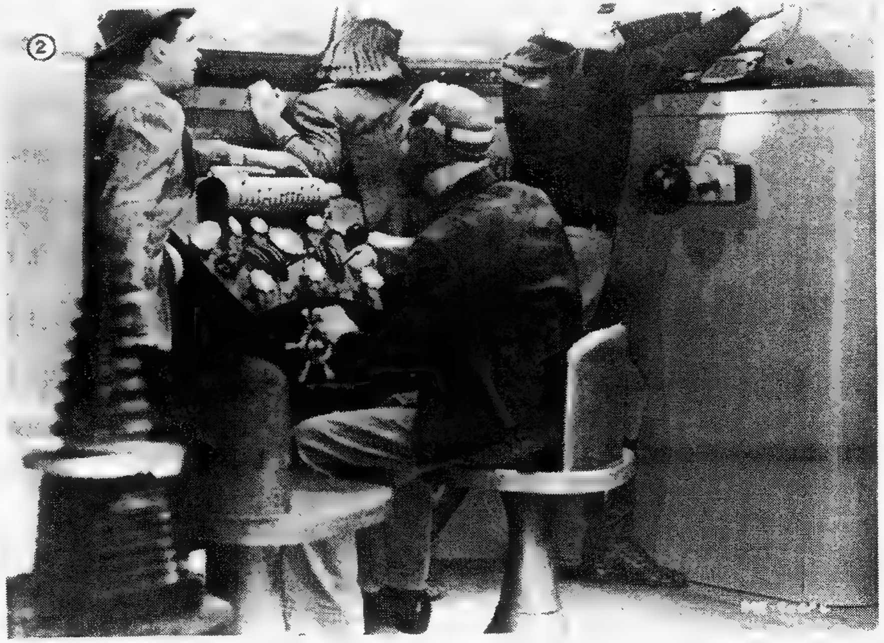
Meanwhile, back at the lab, Ming is working on his lamp, which is causing the cataclysms on Earth by removing the Nitron from the atmosphere. Suddenly an instrument box explodes, spreading flames through the laboratory. Is this the end of Ming the Merciless? Will virtue triumph? Will Universal only hook the kiddies for one chapter of the serial? Not on your life, mister! Ming calmly walks through the flames and turns a handle which stops the fire. Later, the audience learns that the lamp was sabotaged by an ally of the grotesque Clay People. In punishment, Queen Azura uses her magic sapphire to turn him into clay and banishes him to the Clay Kingdom. (Remember this guy. He plays an important part, later in the serial.)

Having changed course for Mars, Flash and his crew discover that their retro-rockets are inoperative, and find themselves inexorably drawn to the surface of the planet Mars. Suddenly, they are hit by the beam from Ming's Nitron Lamp and are thrown into a wild downward spin. Flash and his crew crash land safely in the mountainous Valley of Desolation. Meanwhile, Ming and Azura, suspecting the identity of their adversaries, leave the palace royal in strato-sleds and hasten to confront them. In a short time, they land in the valley. Ming and the soldiers leave the ship to inspect Zarkov's craft, but its occupants have already fled. While they examine the stricken craft, Flash leaves the concealment of the nearby rocks and battles his way into Azura's strato-sled. Azura, having observed Flash on her view-screen, signals King with a search light. (It's evening now [illegible] Flash confronts the Martian Queen, who inquires if "All Earthmen are so violent." "Only," Flash explains, "when we have to be." To Flash's amazement, the mistress of magic disappears in the proverbial puff of smoke. Recovering quickly, Flash forces the strato-sled's pilot to take to the air, with Ming and his followers in hot pursuit. Flash lands again, a short distance away, to take Zarkov, Dale and Happy aboard. Then, just as Ming and the soldiers run up, he blasts off again, leaving Ming far below. Ming is panic-stricken because he knows Flash is heading for Azura's city to destroy the Nitron Lamp. Ming inexplicably arrives at the city ahead of Flash. No mean feat, since he does not possess Azura's magic and Flash had stolen the strato-sled. Anyway, as Flash approaches, Azura sends up a fleet of strato-sleds to repel him. To make matters worse, Flash's reluctant pilot has jumped from the ship, gliding to earth on a bat-wing cape. As the strato-sleds close in, Flash discovers a ray-gun aboard the ship. If he can get close enough to the Nitron Lamp, he plans to use the guns two charges to destroy it! With the strato-sleds

① After returning to Earth, our heroes are ordered out of a U.S. farmer's mellon patch.

③ Flash and Zarkov travel to Azura's palace via the Clay Men's underground rail-car,





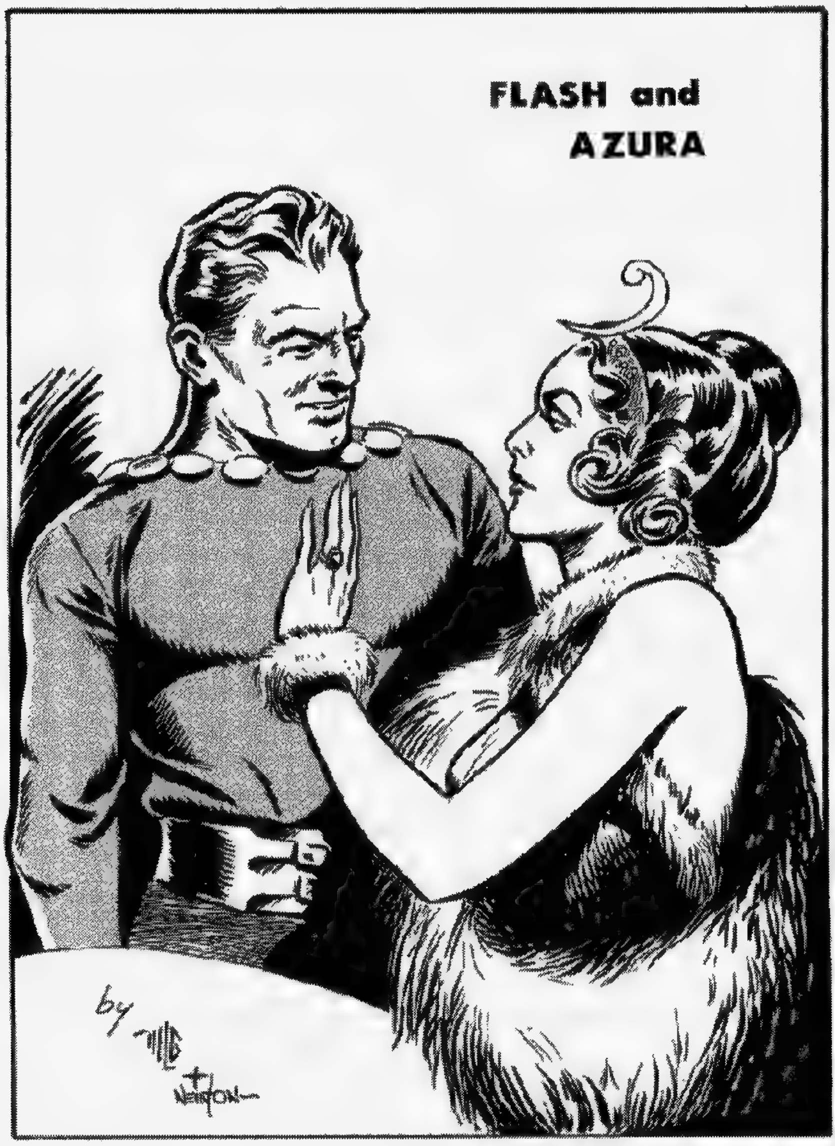
② Flash fires his pistol out of his rocket's window, bringing down a strato-sled. Fantastic shot, Flash!

④ Ming the Merciless communicates with some of his men, via the power house radio.

right on top of them and desiring to save the ray-gun's charges for the Nitron Lamp, Flash downs one of the sleds with a lousy .45 automatic. Fantastic!!! Flash is driven off by the strato-sleds and crash lands in the kingdom of the Clay People. Pursued by Azura's men they run into a cave, where Flash blocks pursuit by sealing the entrance with a charge from the ray-gun he brought from the ship. New danger threatens when they meet the Clay People, who pursue Flash's band to the end of a tunnel. Suddenly, the stalagmites and stalactites begin closing in, trapping them.

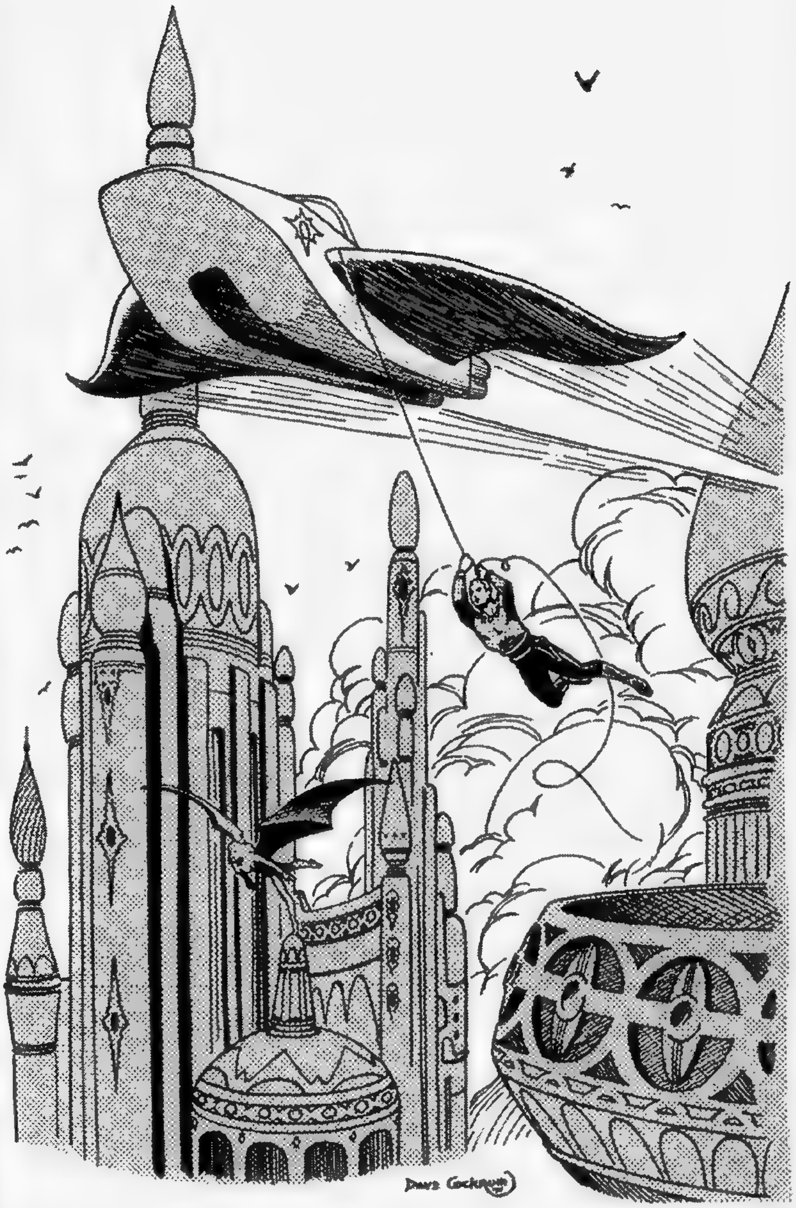
Flash escapes the oncoming points of the stalagmites, by using up the ray-gun's second and final nitron charge. Ming's men, now having landed, hear the explosion. They circle around and gain access to the cave through another entrance, only to be overcome by the Clay People. Meanwhile, Flash and his friends fall victum to a sleep-inducing mist, and awaken to be confronted by the Clay King. The King explains that his race was once the most powerful on Mars, and that Azura, because of her jealousy, has used her magic to transform them to clay and to force them into the somber cave world. Only Azura's magic, controlled by a jewel which she wears, can return the hapless people to normal. Holding Dale and Happy as hostages, the Clay People thus force Flash and Zarkov to attempt a capture of Queen Azura. Disguised in the costumes of Azura's captured soldiers, Flash and Zarkov head toward the palace in one of the strato-sleds. Through sheer audacity, Flash and Zarkov trick Azura into granting them an audience, during which they learn that it is Azura's magic sapphire which is the source of her powers. Flash and Zarkov then seize the Queen, and escape across a bridge of light from the palace to the strato-sled landing tower. This is a particularly excellent special effect, with the three treading carefully across a beam of light while a beautiful Martian city lies below them. Cut to Ming, who activates an oscillator weapon to destroy the landing tower. It does. As the supports collapse, Flash, Zarkov and Azura are sent sliding to their doom.

Seizing Azura, Flash uses a conveniant cable to swing to safety, then returns to execute a safe rescue of Dr. Zarkov, who is clinging to some girders. Azura then repays Flash by blowing some powder from her ring at them. The powder explodes on contact, knocking the duo out. Returned to the palace, Flash finds himself in the hands of Azura and Ming the Merciless. Azura, attracted by Flash's brave defiance, is inclined to be merciful, much to Ming's displeasure. Finally, Ming prevails, and leads Flash and Zarkov to the Nitron Lamp, for the purpose of carrying out their death sentences. Ming orders our heroes thrown into the fiery Nitron Lamp, the same one which is decimating Earth. As the captive pair approach the great cauldron, they overpower the guards. Using Ming for temporary cover, Flash and Zarkov escape in a strato-sled. Unfortunately, the Clay People having seen Flash's daring rescue of Azura, assume that the Earthmen have betrayed them. Azura, in the meantime, has sent a bomber to destroy the Clay People. The Clay King orders Dale and Happy chained outside the cave, directly in the line of fire. Realizing the danger, Flash swoops his strato-sled to intercept the bomber. He soon discovers, however, that Azura's warship is coated with a mysterious substance that makes it impervious to ray attack, and thus concludes that the only way to save his friends is to crash into the other ship. As Zarkov hits the silk, Flash steers his ship straight at the bomber, but when he goes to escape, he finds the escape hatch jammed.



Seizing a "grab in case of sticky-door emergency ray-gun", Flash blasts his way to freedom, gliding to earth via a Martian bat-cape, moments before the cataclysmic collision. Alighting near Zarkov, Flash enters the cave and overhears the Clay King telling Dale that unless Flash returns within 24 hours, she and Happy will be transformed into Clay People, "never to see the sun again!" Realizing their only hope lies in capturing some Nitron from Azura's lab, to force the Clay King into freeing Dale and Happy, Zarkov and Flash decide to employ the Clay People's secret vacuum railway. They commandeer one of the cars used to convey Clay People spies to a listening post beneath Azura's palace. Upon arriving, they are delighted to learn that they are at the entrance to the laboratory. After overpowering the lab guards, Zarkov cannabalizes the lab equipment to create a handy home paralyzing ray. As he tests it on Flash, thereby paralyzing him, (good move doctor) Ming and Azura, having observed this on a visi-screen, rush in and capture Zarkov. Fortunately, Zarkov has the presence of mind to turn a lever which frees Flash, who seizes the paralysis ray and beams it at Ming. Azura, however, disappears in one of her smoke clouds. Unable to escape back through the tunnel, which Azura has filled with poison gas, Flash and Zarkov escape to a rocky region just outside the city. As they are pursued by Azura's bombers, Zarkov is knocked over by a nearby bomb blast. Flash, rushing to rescue his fallen friend, puts the paralysis ray on the ground and accidentally activates it. He is caught in its rays and is frozen in his tracks. Seizing this most golden of opportunities, the bomber closes in for the kill.

Fortunately for Flash, Zarkov has recovered and has crawled to him. Seizing Flash's ankles, he knocks him to the ground, as the over-eager pilot goes sailing overhead, right into the face of a nearby mountain. Flash and Zarkov overpower the bomber's occupents and use their bat-wing glide capes to fly back to Azura's lab. Here they procure gas masks and escape to the Clay Kingdom, via the underground tunnel. Once in the Clay Kingdom, Flash uses the paralysis ray to force the Clay King into listening to his reasons for being on Mars. Flash tells the Clay King that his sole purpose on Mars is to defeat the fiendish Ming. To do this, he relates some of his previous experiences from the prior serial, when he faced Ming on Mongo. Meanwhile, the audience is treated to selected clips from that same serial.



The King, convinced of Flash's veracity and friendship, frees the hostages and advises the reunited party to seek out the Forest People, to aid them in their fight against Ming. Unfortunately, the Forest People prove to be Ming's allies. They thus launch a savage attack on Flash and his friends. During the battle, Prince Barin arrives like the cavalry in a John Wayne movie to aid Flash in defeating the Tree Men. Flash learns of a magical black sapphire which will counter-act the effects of Azura's white one, and manages to procure it from the Tree Men's temple. However, in the process, Happy is wounded by a Tree Man's dart-gun and they rush to return to the Clay Kingdom. Fortunately, the Clay People are able to cure Happy by placing him in a chamber filled with healing mists.

Leaving Zarkov and Dale to care for the stricken Happy, Flash and Barin set out to capture Azura. They again enter the palace through the Clay People's subterranean rail-tunnel. Using the magic black sapphire, Flash is able to neutralize Azura's magic and takes her prisoner. Flash then sets out to destroy the Nitron Lamp, while Barin returns to the Clay Kingdom with Azura. However, Ming's aid, Tarnak, has witnessed Azura's capture and warns Ming of his nemesis' approach. While Ming looks on, Flash enters the power house and confronts Tarnak. Flash demands to know the location of the Nitron Lamp's controls, telling Tarnak that he intends to turn the lamp off. Tarnak snarls, "Ming will kill you for this!" However, under duress, Tarnak leads Flash to some metal doors; he opens them and he and Flash enter the room. Too late, Flash realizes that he has been tricked, as Tarnak seizes a nearby club and crashes Flash to the floor. Tarnak then imprisons Flash in the room, and activates a special device which fills the room with the ominous crackle of electricity. "Nothing can save Flash Gordon now!" cackles Ming.

But something CAN save Flash now, namely, the ray-gun he had dropped when he was thrown, half-conscious, into the small room to die. Using the gun, Flash blasts his way to freedom. Having momentarily escaped Ming's clutches, Flash returns to Azura's palace. There, from a balcony, he focuses a ray-gun at the Nitron Lamp, destroying it. At that moment, however, Ming and his guards appear to attack Flash, who is soon overwhelmed and taken captive. Tarnak takes the hard-won black sapphire from Flash and places it in a metal box where it can no longer affect Azura. Azura, a captive in the Clay Kingdom, is on the verge of returning the Clay People to normal, when suddenly her powers surge back, and she escapes in a puff of smoke. One might wonder, however, how she intended to transform the Clay People to their former selves without her magical abilities? Ah well.

At any rate, Azura returns to her palace and learns of Flash's capture. Upon confronting Ming, Azura learns that Ming has taken the jewel from Flash. When the box is opened, however, the jewel is missing and Ming immediately summons the captured Flash and accuses him of possessing the jewel. "I don't have it," Flash replies, "but even if I did, I wouldn't reveal its location to you." Ming then proposes to kill Flash, so that no one will know of the jewel's location and Azura's power will be unchallenged. Azura agrees and Flash is locked in a disintegration chamber. After Azura has departed, Ming dispatches a messenger to the leader of the Tree People, telling him that the magic black sapphire is in his possession. Obviously, Ming is planning some sort of treachery.

Meanwhile, Zarkov and Barin have located Flash, but at the same time, are discovered looking down from a skylight in on Flash, by Ming's guards. The guards blast away at them, causing a portion of the roof to give way, precipitating them into the disintegrating chamber, where they attempt to free Flash from the steel chair to which he is chained. Before they can free Flash, however, Zarkov and Barin are struck senseless by the disintegrator ray.

Summoning all his strength, in a last desperate effort, Flash snaps his bonds. Quickly, he revives Barin and Zarkov, and the trio make good their escape through the skylight. After Flash escapes Ming, he heads back to the Clay Kingdom, determined to free the Clay People from their curse. The Clay King is curious as to why Barin, like Flash, has come to Mars. While the film again employs clips from the first serial, Barin explains that Ming is his arch-foe, and that it was on his planet that Ming first tried to kill the Earth people. Barin suggests that they return to the Forest Kingdom to retrieve his rocket ship, but while there, Dale is captured by the Tree Men and placed under the influence of the mists of forgetfulness. Since her memory has now vanished, the high priest easily tricks her into swearing allegiance to the Forest People's god, Kalu. While Barin, Zarkov and Happy wait outside, Flash attempts to rescue Dale, but Dale, under the influence of the sinister priest, stabs her would-be rescuer with a sacrificial dagger.

Hearing the sound of battle, the trio charge in to rescue Flash. Zarkov drives the Tree Men back with a ray-gun, while Barin carries Flash to safety. Meanwhile, Dale is brought before the king of the Tree Men, Turan. Turan orders one of his guards to inform Ming of Dale's capture, and awaits Ming's instructions. Ming orders Dale brought to Azura's palace to bait a trap for Flash. All the guards withdraw from the palace, allowing Flash and Zarkov to enter the trap. When Flash and Zarkov reach the lab, Zarkov attempts to concoct an antidote for Dale's malady, unaware that the chemicals he employs have been tampered with by Ming. Suddenly, Zarkov cries - "There's something wrong Flash!" and hurls the beaker to the floor, just as it explodes.

In what amazing fashion does Flash escape? He doesn't! Both he and Zarkov are knocked to the floor unconscious. Tarnak arrives on the scene and reports to Ming and Azura that Flash Gordon has been captured. This report was a bit premature, as Flash and Zarkov revive and before Ming can reach the scene, they force Tarnak to reveal the location of the antidote to the

⑦ Flash instructs Happy to tell Barin and Zarkov that he's located the temple where Dale is being held prisoner.

⑧ Dale is forced to breathe Lithium and swear alliegence to the Forest Men's god Kalu

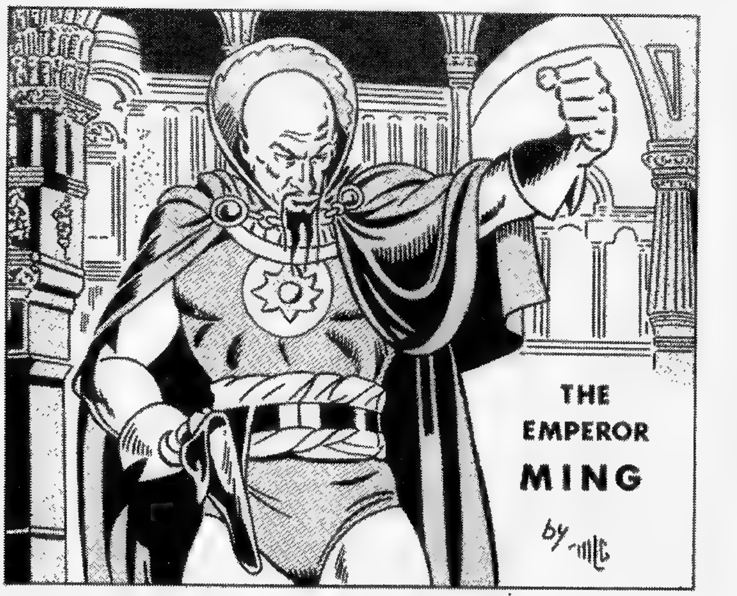
FUJITAKE '71

⑨ Flash and Queen Azura flee from pursuing strato-sleds.

⑪ Flash battles with the captain of the Nitorn Bomber Squad, sent to destroy the Clay People.

⑩ Flash leaves his friends with the Clay King, while he goes to fight the Nitron Bomber Squad.

⑫ Flash interupts the ceremony proclaiming Ming Emperor of Mars.



mists of forgetfulness (or Lithium, as it is sometimes called). Quickly, the pair rush to Azura's palace and administer the antidote to Dale, who recovers even as Ming and Azura learn of Flash's escape. Azura, realizing that Flash is back at the palace, disappears in a puff of smoke, leaving Ming at the power house.

Arriving at the palace, Azura comes face to face with Flash, and promptly takes him and his crew prisoner. As she converses with Flash, however, she is once again impressed by his integrity, courage, and body. Before things get too copacetic, enter the emperor Ming, who declares that Flash must die. Azura takes issue with this plan, and heatedly vows to defend Flash with all the magic at her command. At this point, the arch-villain reaches into the folds of his cloak and produces the black sapphire, smiling icily, "What magic?" Ming, however, makes the mistake of turning to order Tarnak to call out the guards, and as he does so, Flash seizes the black sapphire and makes him his prisoner. Activating a light bridge, Flash and his friends, along with the captive Ming and Azura, head towards a strato-sled landing platform. Halfway across, Ming grimaces downward, and jumps, whereupon Flash has occasion to recall the bat-wing glide capes he encountered earlier in the serial. Ming glides safely to earth and hurries back to the palace. There, he commands the Nitron Bombing Squadron to shoot Flash and Azura down, after they have taken off in a strato-sled. Ming fallicously explains to the Nitron Squad, that Azura's magic will protect her from any harm.

Realizing their peril, Flash sets the strato-sled down in the nearby mountains. Flash, Zarkov, Dale and Azura seek cover in the rocks, as rocket shells explode all around them. Just as they reach safety, Azura panics and dashes out into the open, where she is struck down by one of the blasts. Realizing that they have hit their queen, Azura's men cease firing and begin to land their strato-sleds. Zarkov pronounces Azura's condition "very bad," and as the Queen dies in Flash's arms, realizing that Ming has duped her, she gives Flash her magic jewel and instructs him to free the Clay People. Zarkov tastefully places Azura's cape so that it covers her face, as the crew prepares to leave.

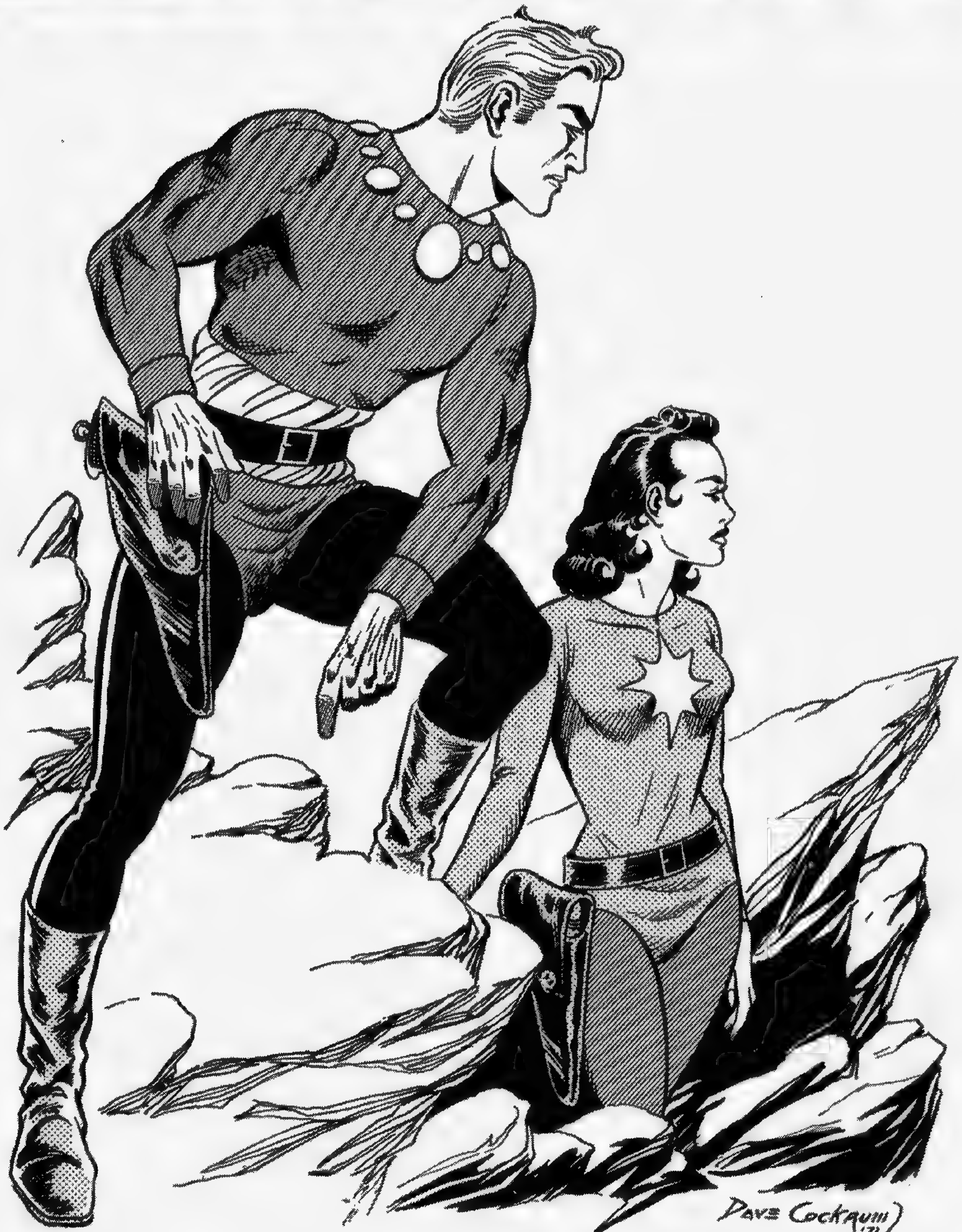
When the Clay King learns of Azura's death, he is crestfallen, for he believes that only Azura can lift the curse. His mood soon changes, however, when he learns that Flash possesses the sacred sapphires. Flash joins the black sapphire with the white, in a glass chamber, and as a surge of electricity passes through them, the jewels dissolve and the Clay People stand restored to human form. Now Flash sets out after Ming.

Meanwhile, Ming, now in control of the palace, dispatches a bombing squad, loaded with Nitron, to decimate the Clay Peoples kingdom. Learning of Ming's intentions, Flash takes off in a strato-sled to circumvent the attack. Using his bat-wing cape, Flash drops to the top of the leading bomber. Gaining access to the ship, Flash overpowers the guards, but in the process, sends the ship into a tailspin. Finally, Flash overcomes the pilot and rights the ship. Thus, while Flash pilots his stolen ship to the Clay Kingdom, the remaining three bombers deliver their cargo of Nitron to the Forest People. War between the two kingdoms is now imminent.

At this point, however, an unknown factor upsets the equasion--the pilot of the strato-sled captured by Flash learns that his brother, whom he had thought dead, is alive in the Clay Kingdom. (Remember the guy Azura turned to clay and banished to the caves, at the beginning of the serial?) The brother explains how Ming and Azura, angered by his actions, sentenced him to the living death of clay until he and his comrades were freed by Flash Gordon. So overwhelmed is the pilot, that he tells Flash that he will aid him in attacking Ming. He tells Flash that Ming is having an audience in the palace, and that it may be possible to come within striking distance of him before they are discovered. They set out in a strato-sled to do just that. Meanwhile, at the palace, Ming is having himself proclaimed Monarch of Mars. Flash cleverly eludes Ming's guards, and enters the throne room. Through powerful oratory, he exposes Ming as the cause of Azura's death and turns the populace against Ming. But Ming literally has something up his sleeve...a ray-gun. "Since you rejected me as your ruler, I'll leave you know," says Ming, "and return as your *conqueror*!" Ming exits via a secret panel with Tarnak. While Flash and the others search for Ming, Ming and Tarnak go to the power house, where they turn the re-built Nitron Lamp on the Earth. As Tarnak watches with mounting horror, Ming gazes through a telescope, viewing scenes of tremendous devastation on Earth, all the while raving that he will destroy the universe. To make matters worse, soldiers loyal to Ming have captured Zarkov, Happy, and the two Martian brothers, and are bringing them to their leader. Unaware of their capture, Flash rushes to the power house to destroy the newly reactivated Nitron Lamp. On the way, he encounters his captured friends and sets them free. As Flash approaches the power house, Tarnak confronts him, but to Flash's surprise, Tarnak declares Ming mad! Unfortunately, Ming sees Flash and company through a nearby window and fires upon them with a ray-rifle. While the others cover him, Flash enters through the power house door. Once inside, Ming attacks him with a ray rifle and manages to capture him. Ming starts to force Flash into the disintegration chamber. Meanwhile, Barin, who has procured a strato-sled, drops a bomb on the power house, which not only destroys the Nitron Lamp, but conveniently knocks Ming to the floor, enabling Flash to grapple with him. As Zarkov and Flash's other friends enter, Flash gains the upper hand and captures Ming. Suddenly, Tarnak seizes a ray-gun! Ming is jubilant! The tables are now turned. Or *are* they? To Ming's horror, Tarnak not only refuses to carry out his commands, but he forces Ming himself to enter the disintegration chamber. Over the impassioned, but futile protests of Flash, Tarnak flips the switch activating the disintegrating beams. Zarkov succeeds in distracting Tarnak, and Flash capitalizes on the diversion to regain the ray-gun. Quickly, they unlock the chamber, but Ming the Merciless is no more! Well, *almost* no more. Ming returns, every atom intact, in the next serial.

Flash has completed his mission! After establishing the friendly Clay King as ruler of Mars, he returns to Earth, where a heroe's welcome awaits him. Crowds cheer and sirens wail, as shots of Flash, Dale and Dr. Zarkov are superimposed over shots of a ticker-tape parade in New York.

FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE



Dave Cockrum '71

UNIVERSAL PICTURES CO. INC. presents..................

FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE!

In 1940 the third and last of the Flash Gordon serials came to the movie screen. Because of the costuming and pagentry, this serial comes the closest to Raymond's later image of Mongo. The characters in this series looked as if they had stepped right out of Alex Raymond's Sunday page. The costuming is some of the most beautiful ever used in a movie serial.

Cast of Characters:

Flash Gordon - Larry "Buster" Crabbe
Dale Arden - Carol Hughes
Dr. Zarkov - Frank Shannon
Emperor Ming - Charles Middleton
Prince Barin - Roland Drew
Sonja - Anne Gwynne

Screenplay by George H. Plympton, Basil Dickey and Barry Shipman.
Directed by Ford Beebe and Ray Taylor.
Associate Producer - Henry MacRae
Art Director - Harold McArthur

From the Alex Raymond newspaper feature owned and copyrighted by King Features Syndicate.

List of the 12 chapters:

The Purple Death - Freezing Torture - Walking Bombs - The Destroying Ray - Palace of Horror - Flaming Death - Land of the Dead - The Fiery Abyss - The Pool of Peril - The Death Mist - Stark Treachery - Doom of the Dictator

Panic sweeps the Earth! People are dying by the thousands, from a strange plague known as "The Purple Death"! A large purple spot on the forehead is the identifying sign of the plague.

Believing the plague is created on another planet, Flash, Dale and Dr. Zarkov rocket into space to find the answer. High above the planet Earth, they encounter one of Ming's ships from Mongo, discharging some dust that disappears as it falls. Realizing this dust is causing the Purple Death, Flash attacks the ship. Flash is winning the battle, when a shot from Ming's ship (commanded by Capt. Torch) disables their ships gun. Flash sends his ship into a dive, making Torch believe he has shot Flash down. Torch then turns his damaged ship back toward Mongo, thinking Flash is dead.

Once out of Torch's sight, Flash pulls his ship out of the dive. Knowing Ming is alive and that he will send other ships to spray the Death Dust on Earth, Flash decides they must return to Mongo and enlist the aid of Prince Barin in overcoming this threat to Earth.

Our heroes arive on Mongo and land in Arboria, the forest kingdom of Prince Barin. Here they are greated by Barin, Aura, Ronal (Barin's cousin), and a character not from the comic strip, Roka. After a brief welcome, Flash is introduced to Queen Fria and Count Korro of Frigia, the ice kingdom, who are also trying to enlist the aid of Barin against Ming. Queen Fria explains that Ming has captured her General Lupi and she wishes Flash and Barin to help in freeing him. They agree and set off, with Count Korro, to attempt Lupi's release and to destroy Ming's laboratory where the Death Dust is made.

In the meantime, Morg, Ming's chief scientist, has found a way to refine the Death Dust, so that it only affects humans with enough intelligence to think for themselves. In this way, Ming will have slaves to rule, when he conquers the Universe. To prove the effects of the Death Dust to Ming, Morg is about to expose General Lupi and a giant of low intelligence, to the Death Dust. At this moment, Flash breaks into the lab, just in time to prevent the experiment.

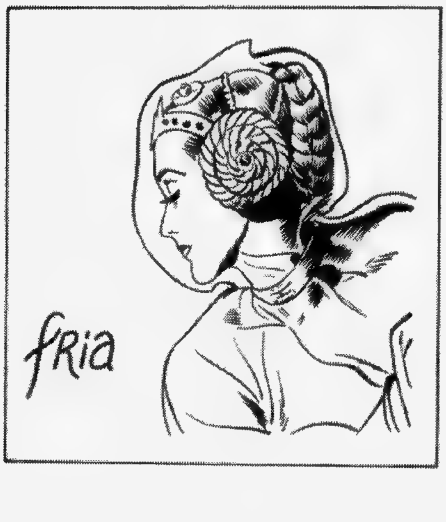
Zarkov sets about planting an explosive to destroy the lab machinery, while Flash and his men cover Ming and his soldiers. Suddenly, Morg jumps at Flash and the lab is filled with battle. As Flash and his friends battle Ming's soldiers, Ming and Torch exit the lab to safety. As Ming exits, he screams - "Kill them! Kill them!" At this point, Zarkov's bomb explodes, destroying the lab machinery. Flash and Morg grapple near the edge of a deep pit, off to the side of the lab. Finally, both men topple into it! In a desperate effort to save himself, Flash grabs a metal bar projecting from the side of the pit, as Morg falls to his death below. Zarkov comes to Flash's aid and lowers a chain, that hangs near the pit, down to him and hauls him up to safety.

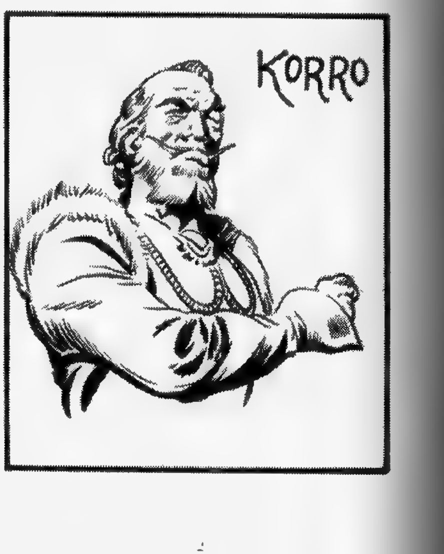
While Flash and his friends escape, Ming orders out the Emperial Guard! Ming - "One hundred thousand Mingols to the man who captures them alive!" Ming now makes two observations. First, Zarkov was clever enough to strike at his lab and the energy pit, which is the source of the Death Dust. (This was the pit that Flash and Morg fell into.) Although not completely destroyed, it has delayed Ming's conquest of the Universe. Secondly, Flash must have made a pact with Queen Fria to mine Polorite, the only antidote to the Death Dust. An antidote that can only be found in the frozen waste lands of Frigia.

Meanwhile, Flash, Zarkov and the others have reached their rocket ship and are now being pursued by a squadron of Ming's ships. Just as the ships close in for the kill, Zarkov pulls a lever on his ships control panel. Zarkov's ship suddenly becomes invisible. Safe from detection, our heroes return to Arboria in safety.

Queen Fria is so grateful to Flash for saving General Lupi, that she gives him permission to mine Polorite in Frigia. While they plan an expedition to Frigia, they are overheard by Sonja, who thinks to herself - "Ming will learn of this!"

Flash and Zarkov lead an expedition into Frigia; protected from the cold, only a Frigian can stand, by a spray devised by Dr. Zarkov. Leaving the ship, Flash, Dale, Barin, Roka and one of the miners begin to climb a huge snow covered mountain in search of the Polorite. They are spotted by a Ming ship, commanded by Capt. Torch, that has been sent to destroy them. The ship drops a bomb that misses, but starts an avalanche. Our heroes are swept away by tons of snow, but miraculously survive at the bottom of a crevasse. They are soon rescued by Dr. Zarkov, after he drives the Ming ship away with his rocket. The mining of the Polorite begins, and Flash radios the news back to his father (Prof. Gordon) on Earth. The radio message is intercepted by Ming. Enraged, and knowing his soldiers cannot withstand the intense Frigian cold, Ming sends Capt. Torch against the expedition with an army of





mechanical men called Annihilations, charged with explosives. Torch is able to control and explode the robots from the safety of his ship. Deep in the frozen wastes, the walking bombs attack the expedition! Flash and the miners battle the Annihilations to no avail. Finally, Flash is knocked unconscious, when Torch explodes one of the robot men. Torch then has a robot man bring Dale to his ship. Zarkov and Ronal try to stop the Annihilations, but Ronal is knocked out and Zarkov is taken prisoner. Torch, believing Flash was killed when he exploded the Annihilation, decides to take Dale and Zarkov to Ming, then return for Zarkov's rocket. After they have taken off, Flash regains consciousness and returns to Zarkov's ship. After being told of what has happened to Dale and Zarkov, Flash refuses to follow them. He tells the others, that his first duty is to get the Polorite to Earth, to stop the Purple Death. "I've got to take the Polorite to Earth first", says Flash. "Then I'll come back and settle with Ming!"

Flash rockets to Earth with the Polorite and tells his father, via radio, that he's going to drop it on Mt. McKinley. Once this is done, all the Death Dust will be attracted to the Polorite and be destroyed. Flash accomplishes this, then tells his father that he's returning to Mongo to free Dale and Zarkov. Flash no sooner arrives on Mongo when he and Roka encounter Torch returning to Frigia to pick up Zarkov's rocket. Torch, amazed to see the very craft he seeks in flight, attacks. Flash, with the use of a smoke screen, tricks Torch into believing he has shot them down. When Torch enters, what he believes to be a stricken ship, he is captured by Flash. Flash then forces the Ming ship's crew to fly them to Ming's palace, hoping to rescue Dale and Zarkov. There, disguised as Ming guards, Flash and Roka make their way through palace corridors. Overhearing a guard say that Zarkov is about to meet his death in the arena, for refusing to aid Ming, Flash rushes up the stairs leading to the arena. Through a window, he sees Zarkov manacled between two stone pillars. As Ming's voice starts the death ray toward Zarkov, Flash leaps through the window and, with sword in hand, tries to cut Zarkov free. Ming, from a balcony, restrains his guards from firing on Flash, saying - "He has chosen his own death!" As the ray engulfs Flash, Roka appears at the window Flash came through. Zarkov sees him and orders him to fire his ray gun at the clock controlling the death ray. He does this and the clock blows up, the death ray stops. Before Ming and his men can recover from this shock, Roka and Flash escape through a door. Dale, who was watching all this with Ming, is escourted away to her quarters and Zarkov is ordered brought to Ming in the throne room.

Ming tells Zarkov he will let him live, but he will have to work, with other scientists in his laboratory, to aid him in conquering the Universe. Zarkov is taken to Ming's laboratory, where he meets Khom, another scientist forced to serve Ming. Zarkov and Khom make a pact to do all in their power to destroy Ming.

Meanwhile, Flash and Roka have appropriated two Ming guard uniforms and have rescued Dale. Using a radio-phone, they also appropriated from Ming's guards, Flash gets in contact with Zarkov in the laboratory. Flash tells Zarkov he won't leave without him. Khom gives Zarkov a means of escape...a monks robe. After telling Flash he'll meet him in the courtyard, where the rockets are, Zarkov dons the robe and simply walks by Ming's guards. What security! What a stupid escape! Oh well, back to the action...
The approach of a fleet of Barin's rocket ships creates a diversion and our heroes escape. However, Barin, not knowing Flash is aboard the Ming ship, orders it shot down.

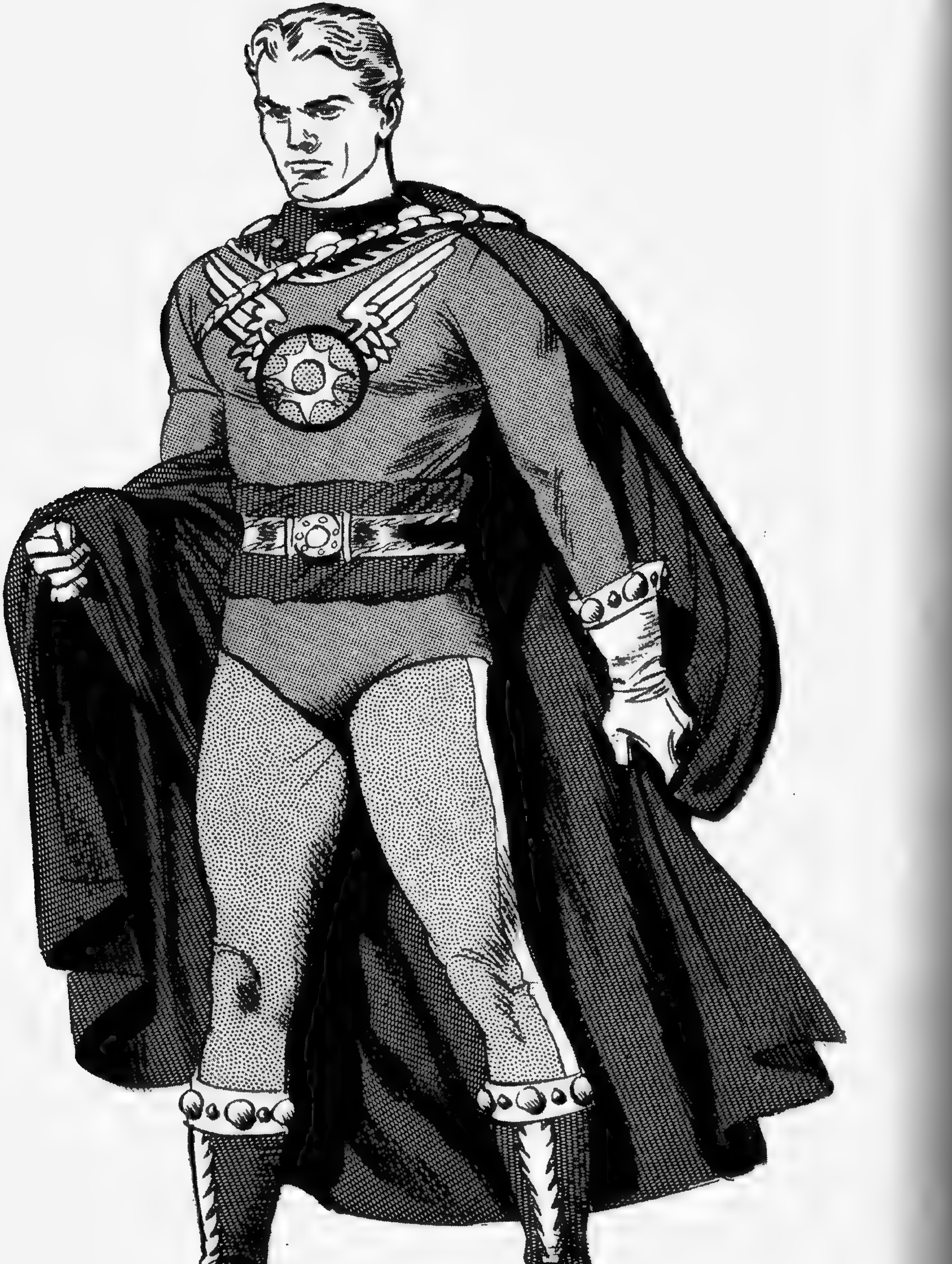
Zarkov has learned from Khom that Ming is preparing another terrible weapon to destroy the world; so after returning to Barin's palace, he tries to find a way to combat it! And none too soon, for back at Ming's palace, Ming is inspecting this new weapon...a fire projectile. This projectile, when it hits its target, bursts into intensive flame, capable of destroying large areas. Ming plans to test the projectiles on the barren regions of Arboria, before directing

With the radio not working aboard Flash's ship, he is almost destroyed. Only his quick thinking saves him. Flash fires a morse code signal to Barin with the ship's ray-cannon. Barin sees the signal and breaks off the attack. Below, Torch and his men, having freed themselves from the ship Flash left them tied up in, can do nothing as the ships return to Arboria.

them at Earth. He chooses the barren areas to show Prince Barin his power and to make him realize what would happen should he direct a projectile at the heart of Arboria. To make sure no harm comes to his daughter, Princess Aura (Barin's wife), Ming arranges, through her attendant lady Sonja, to have her abducted. After this has been accomplished, he fires the projectiles.

To defeat Ming's purpose, Flash takes off with Dale and Ronal, in a ship equiped with Zarkov's untested Thermal Control...a device constructed to combat Ming's fiendish invention. Zarkov's invention consists of a large pointed object that is to be stuck in the ground, in the center of the flames and a control unit to operate it aboard the ship. Dale and Ronal, operating the controls from the ship, watch Flash, in a fire-proof uniform, fighting his way into the raging inferno as the first projectile falls. The Thermal Control resists the fantastic temperature, but suddenly the intense heat melts a connection. The control fails and Flash is engulfed in flames! Fortunately for Flash, Ronal and Dale replace the connection and get the machine working before he is burned to death. The flames now extinguished, Flash radios Arboria to report to Dr. Zarkov. His conversation is cut short, however, when a Ming bomber, with Torch in command, starts bombing the palace. Torch is soon attacked by two of Barin's ships and is thought destroyed, when he sends his ship into a dive. When Barin's ships leave, Torch lands and he and Sonja leave to spy on Prince Barin. Ming's attack on Arboria causes Zarkov to perfect an N-Ray to be discharged from a powerful Nullitron. When used, it will neutralize and render useless Ming's power plant, leaving him open to attack. Barin tells Flash, who has returned from his mission against the flame projectiles, that the Nullitron can best be used against Ming's palace from the Devil's Dome, a high expanse of rock in the land of the Dead. Torch and Sonja, who have been spying on Barin, learn of this and report to Ming. Ming orders Torch to plant a powerful time-bomb on the Devil's Dome. He does this, but is promptly overcome and captured by Rock Men, a race of people long thought dead. Flash and his friends arrive by rocket, unaware of the bomb and the Rock Men. As they begin to set up their equipment, the Rock Men attack. The battle is brief, for the time-bomb Torch planted earlier goes off. Our heroes are rendered unconscious and are taken prisoner by the Rock Men. The Rock Men carry Flash and his friends to a nearby rock ledge. A Rock Man then punches a rock on the side of the cliff and reviving vapors drift from the cracks in the ground and revive our heroes. The Rock Men speak to our heroes in a language Zarkov recognizes as one spoken by an ancient tribe of the Gobi Desert on Earth. All of

① Flash radios his father that he's discovered a cure for the Purple Death....Polorite.



GRAY MORROW

the prisoners are brought before the Rock King, who orders them held until his missing son is returned to him. The king blames the prisoners for his disappearance.

Dale, in a cell with Sonja, tries to get help by calling Khom via a small radio she had hidden on her. Sonja sees this and attacks Dale. They fight, causing the Rock Men guards to come in and seperate them. Sonja is taken out and put in a seperate cell, taking with her Dale's radio. Once Sonja is alone, she turns the radio on and Khom is revealed to Ming as Flash and Zarkov's ally.

Meanwhile, Flash, Zarkov and Roka have decided on a means of escape. Roka pretends he is ill and when the Rock Men guards enter their cell he holds them at bay, while Flash and Zarkov escape. The duo make good their bid for freedom and head back to their rocket for help. On their way, they encounter a tremendous magnetic force, caused by a huge lodestone that had been uncovered by the time-bomb explosion earlier. Clinging to a nearby rock, to avoid being pulled over a chasm ledge where the lodestone is, is the Rock King's son. Flash hits upon an idea to save the boy. He plans to push a boulder down on the lodestone knocking it into the depths of the chasm. However, to do this he must climb dangerously near the chasm's edge and risk being pulled to his death by the lodestone. To make matters worse, the Rock King has ordered the prisoners thrown into a boiling abyss. One of Torch's men perish and Dale is to be next. As Dale is lowered into the abyss, Roka attack and for a moment Dale is free. However, she is recaptured and returned to the abyss. Just as she is about to be thrown in, Zarkov and Flash appear, successful in their mission to save the Rock King's son. In gratitude for what Flash has done, they are all set free. It is at this moment that Sonja, Torch and one of his men make a break for freedom. They try to escape via the rocket in which Barin and Ronal are waiting for Flash to return from setting up the Nullitrion. However, before they can do this, Flash, with the aid of some Rock Men, recapture the trio. Now, with everyone safely aboard Barin's rocket, they leave the Land of the Dead.

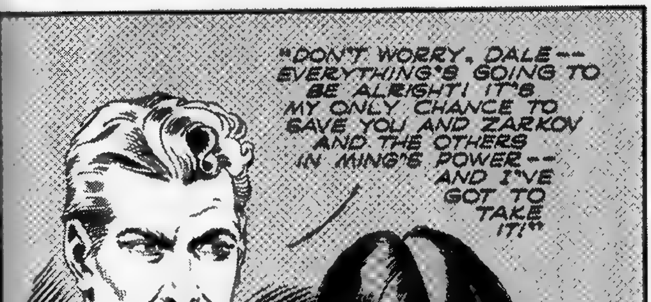
Instead of returning to Arboria, a rescue mission to release Princess Aura is undertaken. They manage to get in contact with Aura and Capt. Sudin (Capt. of the Palace Guard loyal to Barin) via Khom's secret radio. Sudin is instructed to open the entrance door of an underground tunnel leading to the palace, at 6.30 that evening. Sudin does so, and our heroes gain entrance. As they move along the tunnel, they meet and come to grips with, a detachment of Ming's guards. One guard sounds an alarm that brings Ming to the control room. He sees the battle on a view screen and orders Capt. Sudin to open the flood gates. Sudin does so, and torrents of water sweep our heroes to their doom. However, unnoticed by Ming, Sudin opens the gates to a side tunnel and Flash and his party are saved. Realizing they can not accomplish their mission at this time, Flash and his friends return to Arboria.

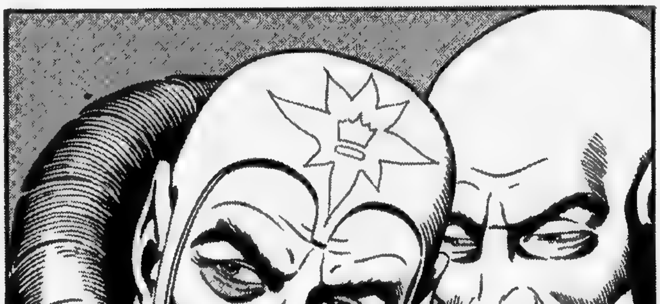
Later, Ming and his guards catch Aura and Khom trying to send a message over the radio hidden in the lab. Khom tries to strangle Ming and is killed. Ming learns Flash is alive, when communication with Khom is attempted over the radio by Zarkov. Ming has one of his guards imitate Khom's voice, so Zarkov won't learn of Khom's death and discovery of the radio. The ruse works.

A short time later, Sonja and Torch, confined in prison cells in Barin's palace, escape to the radio room. There they overpower the operator and communicate with Ming. Ming instructs Torch to send out a false order, grounding Barin's space ships. This will clear the way for Ming's bombers. Torch does this, then destroys the radio, to prevent Barin from countermanding the orders. Dale overhears all this and is captured by Torch and Sonja who flee with her to the roof of the palace. Learning of this, Flash pursues and corners them. Flash and Torch lock in battle as the Ming bombers begin their attack. Dale, Sonja and Ronal, who has just joined them on the roof, are overcome by the gas emanating from the bomb blasts. Flash and Torch, in the meantime, have battled near the edge of the roof, where their desperate struggle causes them to fall off. They plunge downward into the palace moat. Flash looks around him and sees Torch floating unconscious nearby. He proceeds to pull Torch from the moat, as, up above, a Ming bomber lands on the palace roof. Ming's men leave the rocket and return, a few moments later, with the unconscious Dale, Sonja and Ronal. The ship takes off again, with only seconds to spare, as Barin's ships appear on the scene to beat off the Ming ships. The ship carrying Dale, Sonja and Ronal escapes Barin's forces and returns to the palace of Ming.

Crafty Ming, wanting the return of Capt. Torch, who is still held prisoner by Flash, devises a treacherous plan. He contacts Flash and Barin and proposes an exchange....Dale Arden and Ronal for Capt. Torch. The trade is made, but as Flash rockets away Dale passes out. A note from Ming, placed in Ronal's belt before the exchange, explains what has happened. Dale has been given a drug that will soon kill her if she and Dr. Zarkov are not returned to Ming's power at once. Zarkov has no choice...he must submit!

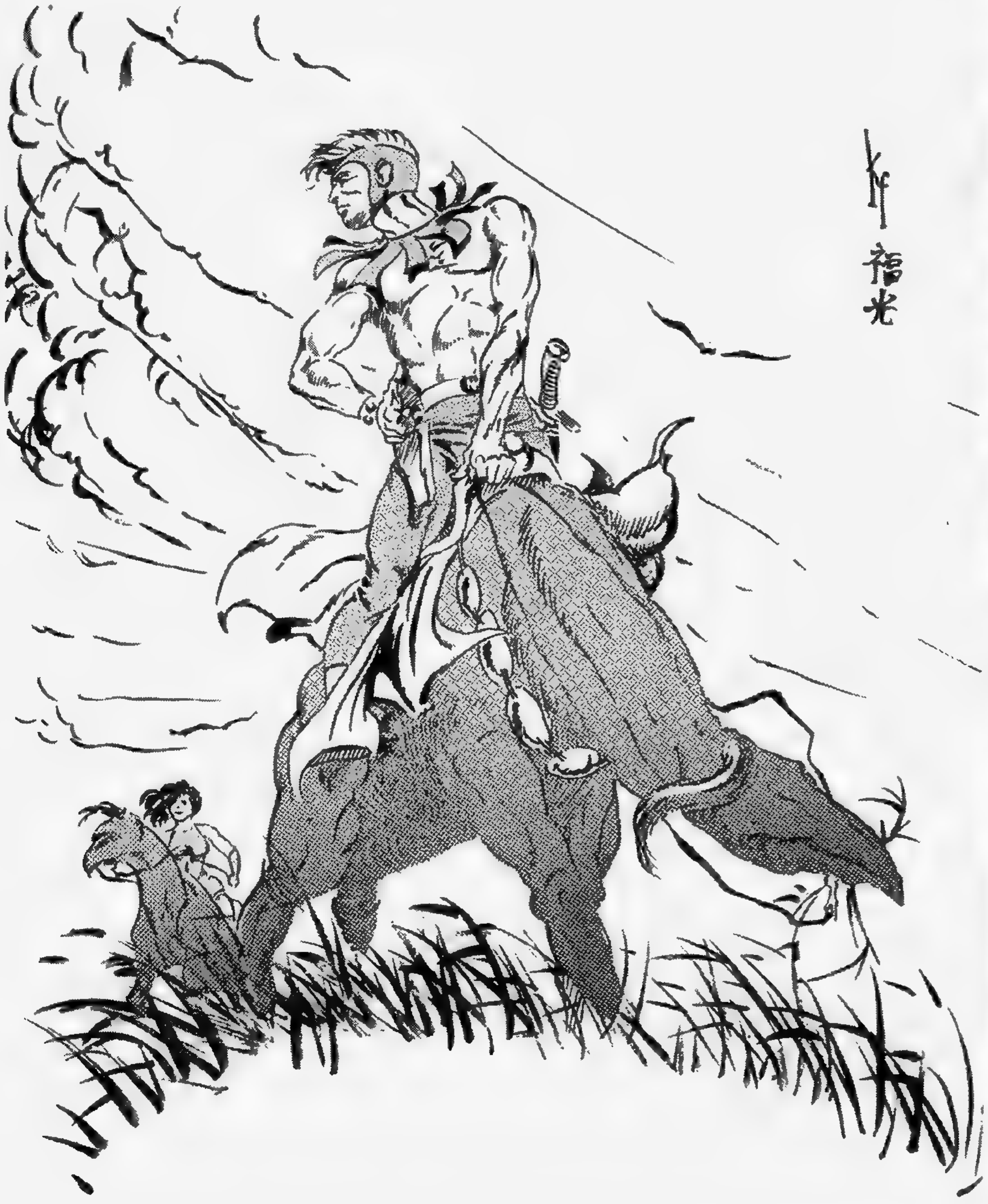
With Dale, Aura and Zarkov held captive, Ming now has power over Flash and Barin. Desperate, Flash leads a rescue party into Ming's palace, via an abandoned tunnel and soon locates the room where Dale and Aura are being held. However, Flash is unaware that the room is protected by a death dealing electrical trap, set by Ming! Flash, with sword in hand, starts to enter the room. Dale screams a warning and Flash only receives a partial electric shock. Barin finds the controls and turns off the electric current. After Flash revives, he, Dale, Aura, Barin and Roka head for Ming's lab where Zarkov is held prisoner. They battle their way into the lab and seal its entrance. Now in


"DON'T WORRY, DALE-- EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE ALRIGHT! IT'S MY ONLY CHANCE TO SAVE YOU AND ZARKOV AND THE OTHERS IN MING'S POWER-- AND I'VE GOT TO TAKE IT!"


"ALL IS READY, SIRE! GORDON WILL TROUBLE YOU NO MORE!"
MIKE ROYER '71

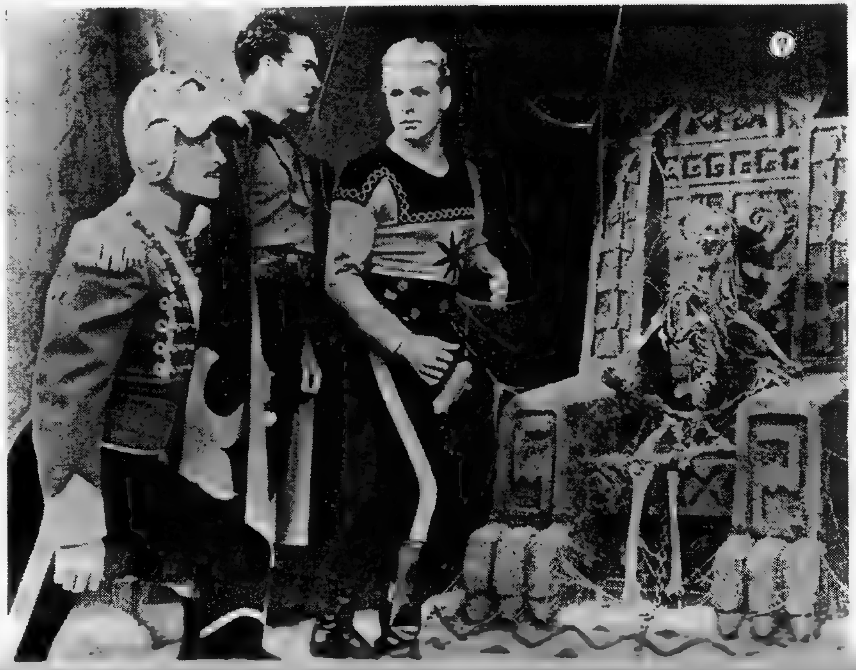
② Flash battles an Annihilation to save Dale.
④ Zarkov, Flash, Dale and Barin check the Nullitron gun.

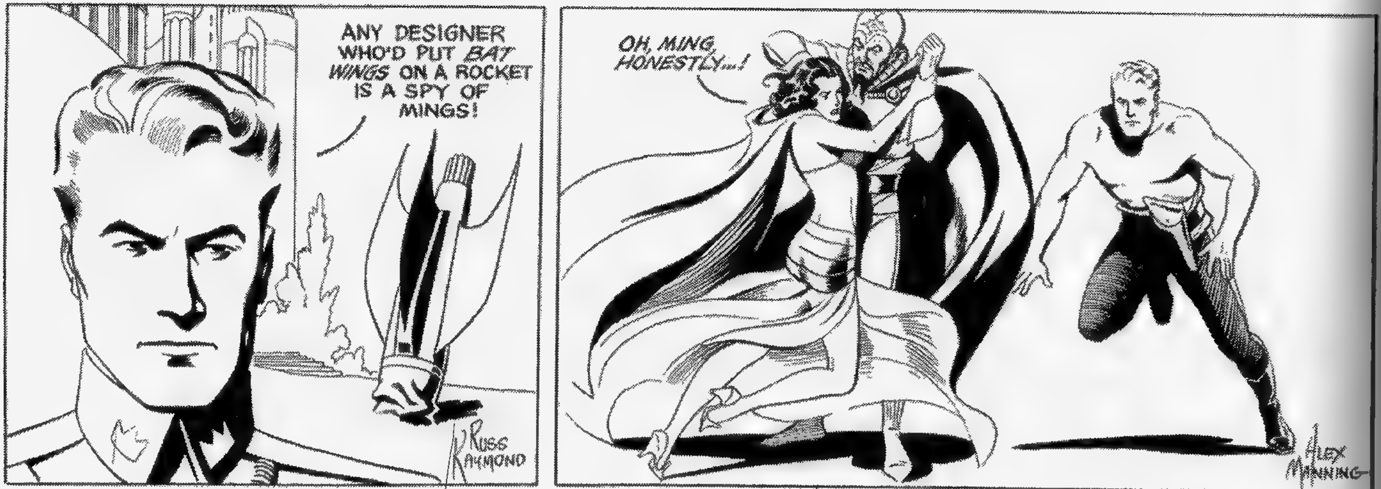
③ Flash isn't making out too well.
⑤ Flash, Dale, Zarkov and Roka captured by Rock Men.



⑥ Dale and Aura are told about the electronic death trap by Ming

⑦ Roka, Barin and Flash on their way to free Dale, Aura and Zarkov.




ANY DESIGNER WHO'D PUT BAT WINGS ON A ROCKET IS A SPY OF MINGS!
RUSS RAYMOND
OH, MING, HONESTLY...!
ALEX MANNING

SAMPLES DRAWN FOR AN AD AGENCY PLANNING A CAMPAIGN FOR AMPEX, SATYRIZING FLASH GORDON

control of the laboratory, Zarkov discovers the source of Ming's power...Thilinium! Thilinium, powered by rays from the sun, energizes all of Ming's weapons. With this power in Zarkov's hands, he holds Ming at bay.

Meanwhile, Ming has the laboratory surrounded by his soldiers and gives Flash and his friends one hour to surrender. He also tells Zarkov that he has a power other than Thilinium at his disposal. Flash and Roka, using the uniforms of the guards they clobbered breaking into the lab, slip out through a secret tunnel to spy on Ming. They get close enough to the throne room to learn what the other source of Ming's power is. A rocket ship loaded with Solarite, a tremendously powerful explosive Ming had planned to use on the cities of Earth.

Flash and Roka have no sooner returned to Zarkov with this information, when Ming calls the lab on the visa-phone. Ming tells Zarkov if he doesn't surrender, he'll send a ship of Solarite against the Earth and destroy it. Zarkov stalls Ming by saying he must discuss the matter with his friends. Ming gives him five minutes.

Five minutes is all Flash needs. While Zarkov and the others slip out of the lab, via the secret tunnel, and escape in Barin's rocket, Flash takes over the ship filled with Solarite. Learning of this, a paniced Ming flees to his tower laboratory with Torch and Sonja. From this tower lab, Ming plans to use the tower's auxiliary controlls to detonate the Solarite before it can be used against him. Ming calls to his control room, to have the auxiliary controlls activated. There is no reply. Capt. Sudin, loyal to Barin, is in charge. Sudin radios Ming's location to Flash, at the same time electronically locking Ming's tower door. He then makes a statement to another guard, loyal to Barin, that is with him. "I never thought it would be in my power to destroy Ming!" He also tells the other guard that there is another way out of the tower, but Ming will never think of it in time. This statement would lead one to believe the script writers were leaving the door open for a fourth serial, by giving Ming a means of escape. However, the fourth serial never took place.

Meanwhile, Flash heads the Solarite ship at the tower. Ming sees the ship and tries to escape through the door, only to find it locked! Flash parachutes out of the ship and moments later Ming, Torch and Sonja are blown to pieces!

After being reunited with his friends, Flash is told by Barin that by destroying Ming he has saved the Universe. Flash replies - "In his mad ambition, Ming declared that he was the Universe." Zarkov ends the adventure by saying - "Then since you've conquered Ming, I shall radio your father - FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE!"

EDITOR'S NOTES:

I'd like to use this remaining space to relate a few facts pertaining to the serials and other Flash Gordon material.

The Flash Gordon serials are movie film classics. Perhaps the dialogue sounds "corny" by today's standards, but keep in mind these serials were made well over 30 years ago. They are, without a doubt, the best movie serials ever made.

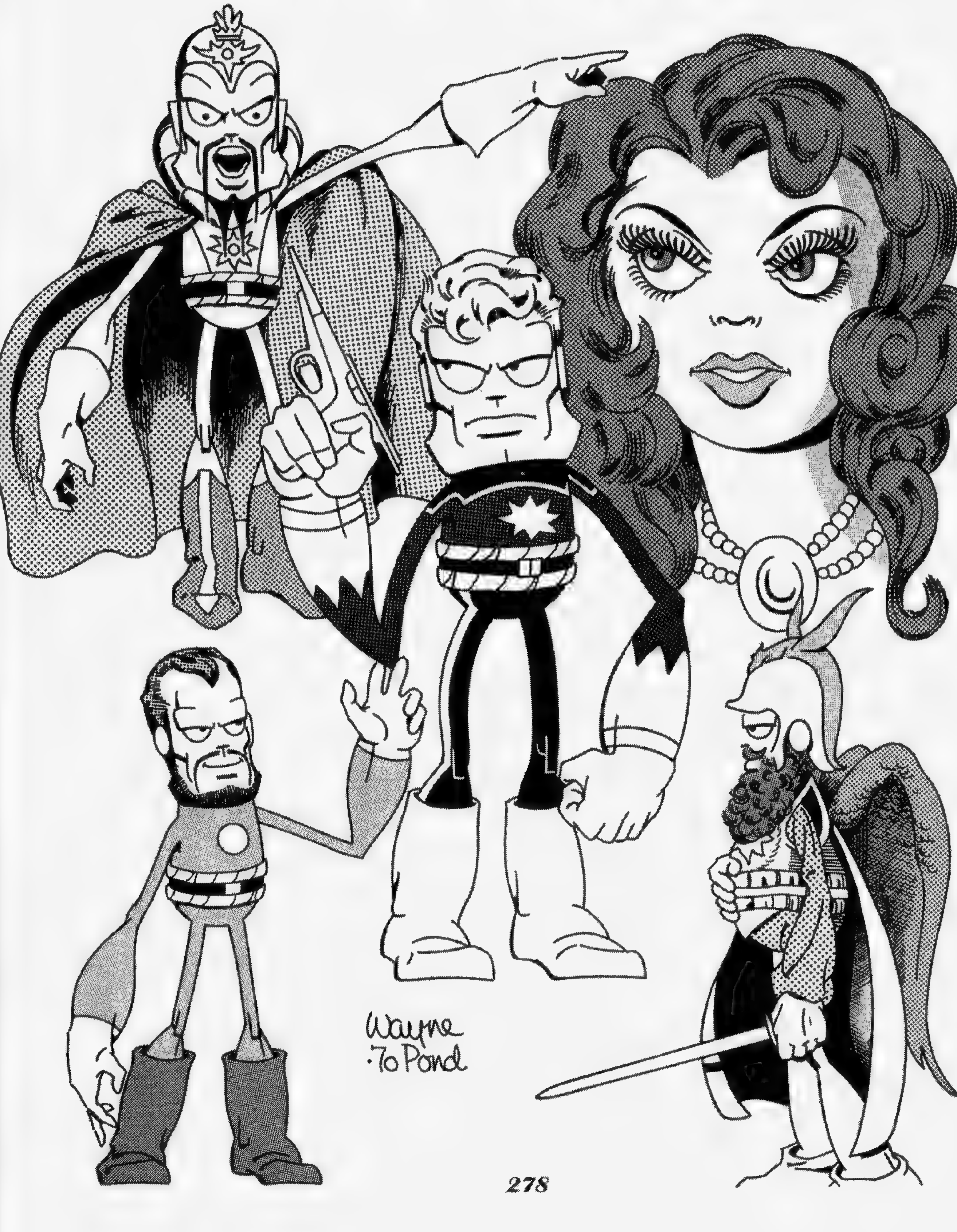
The Flash Gordon serials were also made into feature versions and have been released for TV showings as well. The first serial was renamed "Space Soldiers". The second had two names, "Mars Attacks the World" and "Space Soldiers Trip to Mars". The third was retitled, "Space Soldiers Conquer the Universe".

In the last serial, there were two major cast changes. Richard Alexander (Prince Barin) was replaced by Roland Drew and Carol Hughes took the place of Jean Rogers, as Dale Arden.

Although "Conquers the Universe" based its costumes, characters and locations upon the newspaper strip, it had little to do with Raymond's story line. However, it was a much more fitting sequel to the first serial.

Although the people in charge at Universal tried to keep accidents at a minimum, some hair raising ones did take place. Buster Crabbe was forced through some broken glass in a shattered swimming pool and into a tank, in one instance and became badly lacerated in another. Jean Rogers, Dale Arden in the first two serials, was almost drowned in one sequence; while Priscilla Lawson, who played Princess Aura in the first serial, came in contact with an electronic machine, with a wet hand and received quite a jolt. It was because of accidents like these, that doubles were used in many of the dangerous sequences. This protected the producers of the film from being held up on production, plus a good deal of added expense.

FRIENDS OF *FLASH GORDON*


Wayne
·70 Pond

FRIENDS OF FLASH GORDON is the getting together of some Flash Gordon fans to discuss various aspects of the Flash Gordon strip. Flash's friends, for this panel, are:

MIKE ROYER - JOE SINNOTT - TONY ISABELLA and myself - MARTIN L. GREIM.

Tony's replies, to the questions I asked, were submitted in the form of a short article. I felt it best not to break up this article, so Tony's comments will appear as one statement at the end of this discussion.

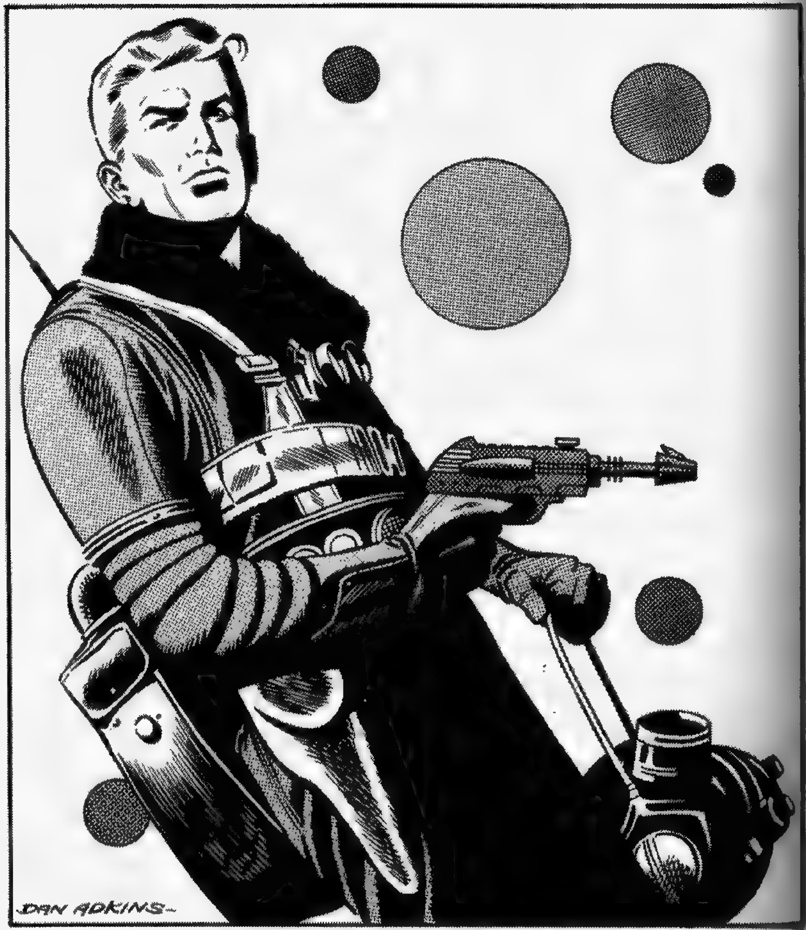
The first question is:
"Besides Flash Gordon, what character in the Flash Gordon strip do you most enjoy and why?"

MIKE ROYER - That has to be Ming, the Merciless, Emperor of the Universe. I don't really know if I can find a real reason for liking him, but there's something so nasty about the character to make him appeal to me. He's the perfect villian, as far as I'm concerned. I'm only sorry that he never returned to Raymond's pages when the artist returned the strips locale to the planet Mongo.

How about the character that appeals to me the least? For instance...Kang! God, what a waste! Oh well...

JOE SINNOTT - I always liked Prince Barin, probably because Raymond patterned him after Errol Flynn, a particular favorite of all boys of 12 in 1938. This was the time of the Robin Hood movie also. I'm sure Raymond was influenced by it.

MARTIN GREIM - Vultan, king of the Hawkmen, is my personal favorite. This character and the world he ruled, has to rank as one of the most imaginative of Raymond's creations. Sheldon (Shelly) Moldoff, DC's Hawkman artist of the 40's, must have thought so too. He swiped many, many shots from the Hawkmen series, as well as from the other Flash Gordon stories.



Question #2:
"What Flash Gordon story is your favorite and why?"

MIKE ROYER - That's a tough question. Sentiment plays a big part in my picking the period of June 1940 through July 1941. As you'll read later, it's the first Flash I ever saw and I reread it a thousand times. This period is titled "The prisons of Mongo", by Larry Ivey. However, there's moe to it than the prisons... the Powermen, rocket bombers, secret police, the overthrow of Ming and declaration of Free Mongo, etc.

JOE SINNOTT - My reasons for picking Barin as my favorite character would also have to apply for my pick of favorite story. The "Forest Kingdom" series, I also feel was Raymond's best artistic achievement. The Ice Kingdom story was also great.

MARTIN GREIM - I'd have to say "The Tyrant of Mongo" story is my favorite. This story had the famous dueling sequence between Flash and Ming, Ming's capture and escape, plus Sonja getting her just reward for helping Ming. (She was executed) This series was fast paced and filled with suspense. Flash almost had Ming here!

Question #3:
"How would you compare Flash's second trip to Mongo to his first?"

MIKE ROYER - Raymond was instructed by the syndicate to clean things up on Mongo and return Flash, Dale and Zarkov to Earth. It seemed Flash should do his bit towards combating the enemies of democracy, as in his case, The Red Sword and his Invaders. In appearance they were German, however their salute was the Communist clenched fist and the Nazi outstretched arm. In January, 1941, Flash returns to Mongo to obtain radium to aid the U.S. war effort. Realistically, when the U.S. did go to war against Nazi Germany, the strip couldn't have Flash fight the German's with Zarkov's knowledge of rockets and death-rays, etc - so Flash had to be returned to Mongo. The way the story goes, Raymond was furious that the syndicate told him what to do with his creation, so after liberating Mongo and returning Flash to Earth, he became disenchanted. Raymond stopped writing and only polished up stories the syndicate contracted for him. Although the art from Jan '41 on 'till the end of Raymond's work on Flash Gordon is handsome and well executed, it doesn't "feel" as well as the prewar output. So, my answer to your question must be that I much prefer Flash's 1st visit to Mongo. The 2nd visit looks nice, but doesn't hold a candle in comparison. Oh...where'd I get that stuff about Raymond and the writing? Like they say in the movies, "From a very reliable source".

JOE SINNOTT - I feel Flash's second trip couldn't compare with the first. Mainly because the element of surprise was lost. I also feel his work after 1940 was never the same.

MARTIN GREIM - I'd have to say his first trip too. However, I believe his second trip mirrored the times more. The battles were tactically waged, like those in real life, rather than romantically, with Flash overcoming great obsticles single handedly.

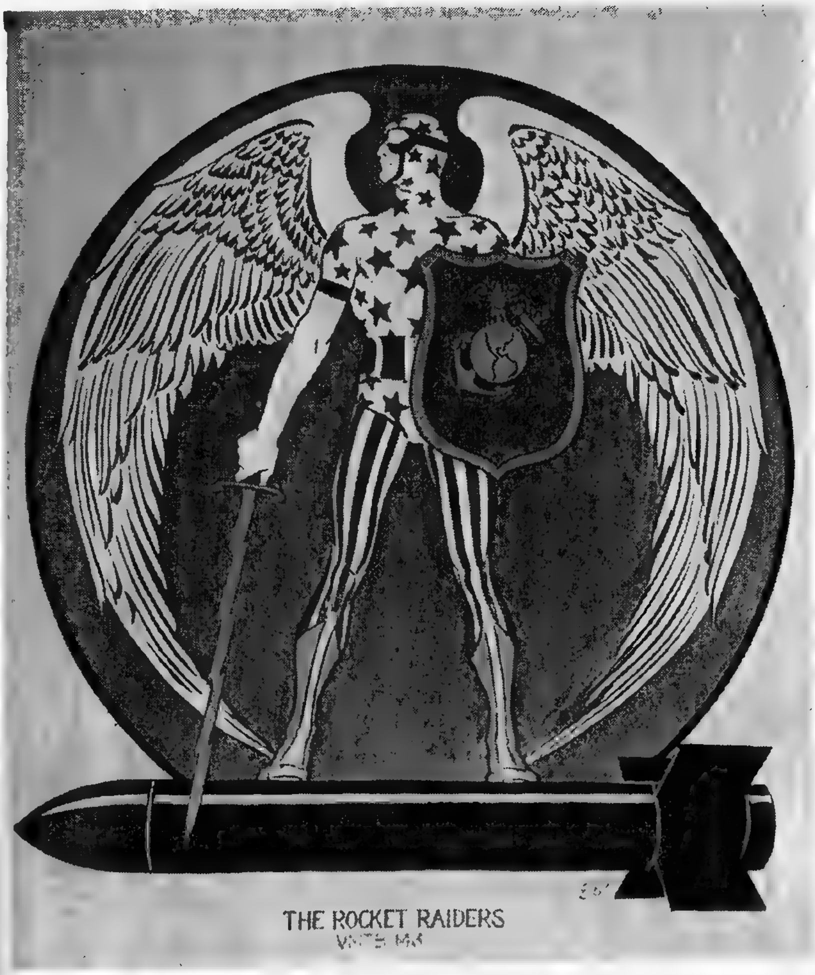
Question #4:
"Besides Raymond, what other artist on the Flash Gordon strip have you enjoyed the most?"

MIKE ROYER - Enjoy is a difficult word. Next to Alex Raymond, the artist who most kept the real "feeling" of Flash and Mongo, was Austin Briggs. It's obvious that Briggs was only doing it for the money, and page after page of his Flash stand as examples of a man drawing as little as he possibly can. Yet, there's something about them. Damn it...I look at some of those simple pages and they're beautiful. For me, Briggs somehow feels right. Also his daily strips shouldn't be forgotten. Although the stories are as silly as those written for the Sundays, it's still the "real" Flash, graphically.

JOE SINNOTT - After Raymond, it's hard to compare. However, Briggs, Barry and Williamson certainly have done excellent work with Flash. I can't appreciate the style that is being used today. What a job Williamson would do with a Sunday page.

MARTIN GREIM - Austin Briggs and Al Williamson certainly captured the Raymond flavor and in this area they are my favorites. However, for the other world of Flash Gordon, the more science fiction world, Mac Raboy had a certain look that I really enjoyed. However, I and a legion of Flash Gordon fans, would love to see Al Williamson do the Flash Gordon Sunday pages. He's Alex Raymond reincarnated.

Question #5:
"In story line, how would you compare Flash Gordon



with Buck Rogers?"

MIKE ROYER - You know, it's funny...as a kid, and even now, I've never considered Flash and Buck in the same league. Of course, when you look back at the strips of 1949 on through to around 1958, I'd take Buck over Flash any day for drawing that appeals to me. Don't misunderstand me...I love the Buck Rogers Sunday strip, but it just wasn't the same kind of feeling I had for Flash. I could get totally involved in Raymond's worlds.

JOE SINNOTT - I never read Buck Rogers very much, so I can't compare their story lines. I can't see how Flash could be equaled however - Raymond was such a great story teller.

MARTIN GREIM - I could never really get interested in Buck Rogers, except when Murphy Anderson drew him. As Mike said, "You get totally involved in Raymond's worlds" and I just couldn't do that with Buck.

Question #6:
"At what point in the Flash Gordon story line did you enjoy Raymond's art the most?"

MIKE ROYER - The evolution of his draftsmanship of April 1937 through July 1938. But I dig it all! The first couple of years were his best as a "comic" artist. Late '38 through 40 were probably his best for overall detail, '40 and '41 were, I believe, his most comfortable as a stylist. It's interesting to note that Hal Foster joined King Features Syndicate in 1937 (Feb.) and in Feb - '38 Prince Valiant is syndicated Nation wide in the same Puck comic section with Flash Gordon. Notice what period Raymond eliminates baloons for straight narrative and refines his work to super draftsmanship? That's right...1937 - 1938. Influence? Competition?

JOE SINNOTT - I liked the Raymond art of '36 - '40.

MARTIN GREIM - The 1940 - 1941 period. From "Tyrant of Mongo" into "The Ice World of Mongo" is how I picture Flash. Raymond at this point, showed great draftsmanship. His later work just didn't have the detail his work at this period contained.

Question #7:
"In closing, expound on anything related to Flash Gordon that you'd care to."

MIKE ROYER - For me, Flash Gordon came into existance one cold rainy Oregon evening in the early fall of 1950. I was thumbing through the comic books, on the rack at our families regular grocery store. I came upon Harvey's Flash Gordon No. 1. I had no prior exposure to the wonderful worlds created by Alex Raymond. In fact, it wasn't until two years later, while digging in a trunk in that fabulous repository of treasures, my grandmother's attic, that I even became aware that the Flash Gordon of Harvey Comics had pre-existed on the colored Sunday comic page, and that its creator had a name at all. Resting at the bottom of the trunk, where my mother had placed them as a girl, I discovered there was much more to Flash Gordon than 4 eyeworn Harvey Comics. A question of my own now - Why didn't the writers of the strip use Ming again, after Flash was returned to Mongo? Let's face it...Raymond never said Ming was dead...just paralyzed...oh well.

JOE SINNOTT - You can't realize what a thrill it was to be a kid of 8 when many of these great strips started in 1934 - Flash, Terry, etc. You wouldn't believe how we waited for the Sunday page. It was great anticipation, as these adventures were all new and quite believable to a boy growing up with them. It was a great period to be a kid!

MARTIN GREIM - Flash Gordon began for me as a short feature in King Comics and one Harvey comic, I had as a boy. Through the years, I saved certain comics and Flash Gordon was one of them. It was Al Williamson's first King Comic that reawakened my interest in Flash. I had been involved with super heroes for so long, that I had almost forgotten how great Raymond's worlds were. However, as you can see by this issue, my love for Flash Gordon didn't stay dormant long.

TONY ISABELLA

Flash & Dale & Tony & Azura

by Tony Isabella

The world is full of roobs. I know. I work for a newspaper. Most papers are produced for roobs by roobs. Especially those newspaper "funnies." The roob comics page reader reads Li'l Abner for the radical new insights it offers. When he wants realism, he reads Mary Worth and believes matchmaking is the key to happiness. He thinks Nancy is outrageously funny and that Pogo is a strip for the "little kiddies." He's the man who invariably gets elected to public office by thousands like him. Help!

The roob doesn't appreciate Flash Gordon. The roob can't get into a world totally unlike his. He can't appreciate the building of an existence totally unlike his. High adventure to the roob is watching Matt Dillon shoot an unarmed drunk. Fortunately, none of we who gather here are roobs. We can discuss Flash Gordon and the amazing world Alex Raymond created for us. The roobs are watching Hee Haw in the next room.

Woody Gelman started it for me. He came out with that fantastically beautiful Flash Gordon volume, page after page of exciting enchantment. I was hooked. I bummed comic book reprints of Flash Gordon newspaper strips. I sat enraptured, while viewing the three Flash Gordon - Buster Crabbe serials. My feet were solidly planted. I watched four chapters of Buck Rogers, before realizing the thing did not take place on Mongo. I saw Hawkmen where they weren't and thoroughly enjoyed the illusion. I begged Big Little Books from a generous collector, to fill the gaps of my reading. Mongo might not be the best of all possible worlds, but it's better than fighting with city editors.

Flash Gordon dominates the Flash Gordon strip. He is Alex Raymond's central mover and that's as it should be. But, it is to Raymond's credit that he was able to populate the strip with other well-developed and interesting characters. Dale, Zarkov, and Ming are stereotypes carried beyond the limits of that sterotyping and made to breathe a special realism into the strip. Nor did Raymond cheat on supporting characters like Vultan and Gundar. Each has a realism of his own. Even bit players, like Captain Solis and Major Darin (both in the Nostalgia Press book), have a nobility and reality that few leading characters had. My favorite character? Discounting Flash, it would have to be Azura the Witch Queen. Gundar, Vultan and Major Darin follow closely, but I have this fetish for beautiful sorceresses. They contain an earthiness within a mystic aura and that's a hard combination to ignore.

Flash Gordon (by Alex Raymond) is possibly the greatest comic strip adventure ever recorded. But one episode in the run of the strip stands out from the

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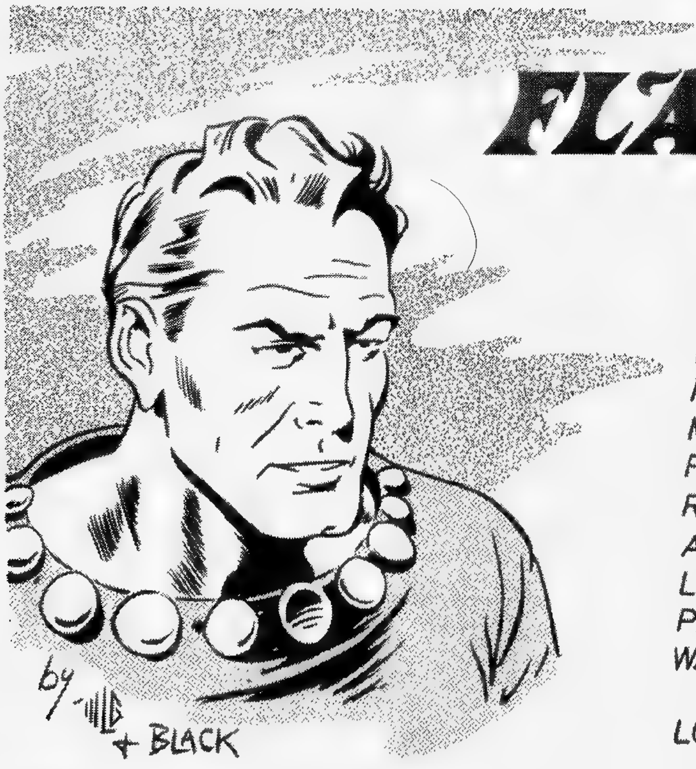
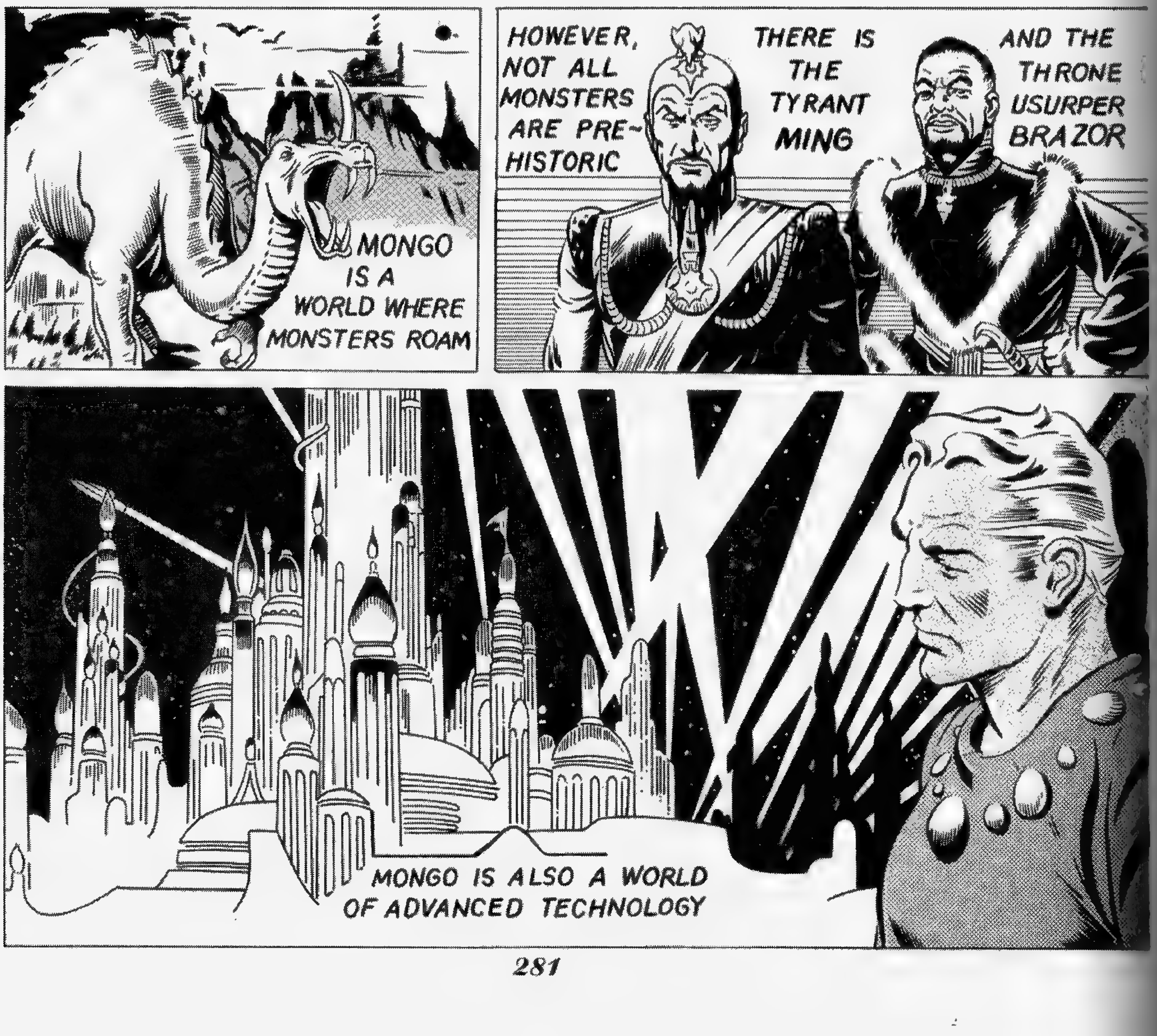
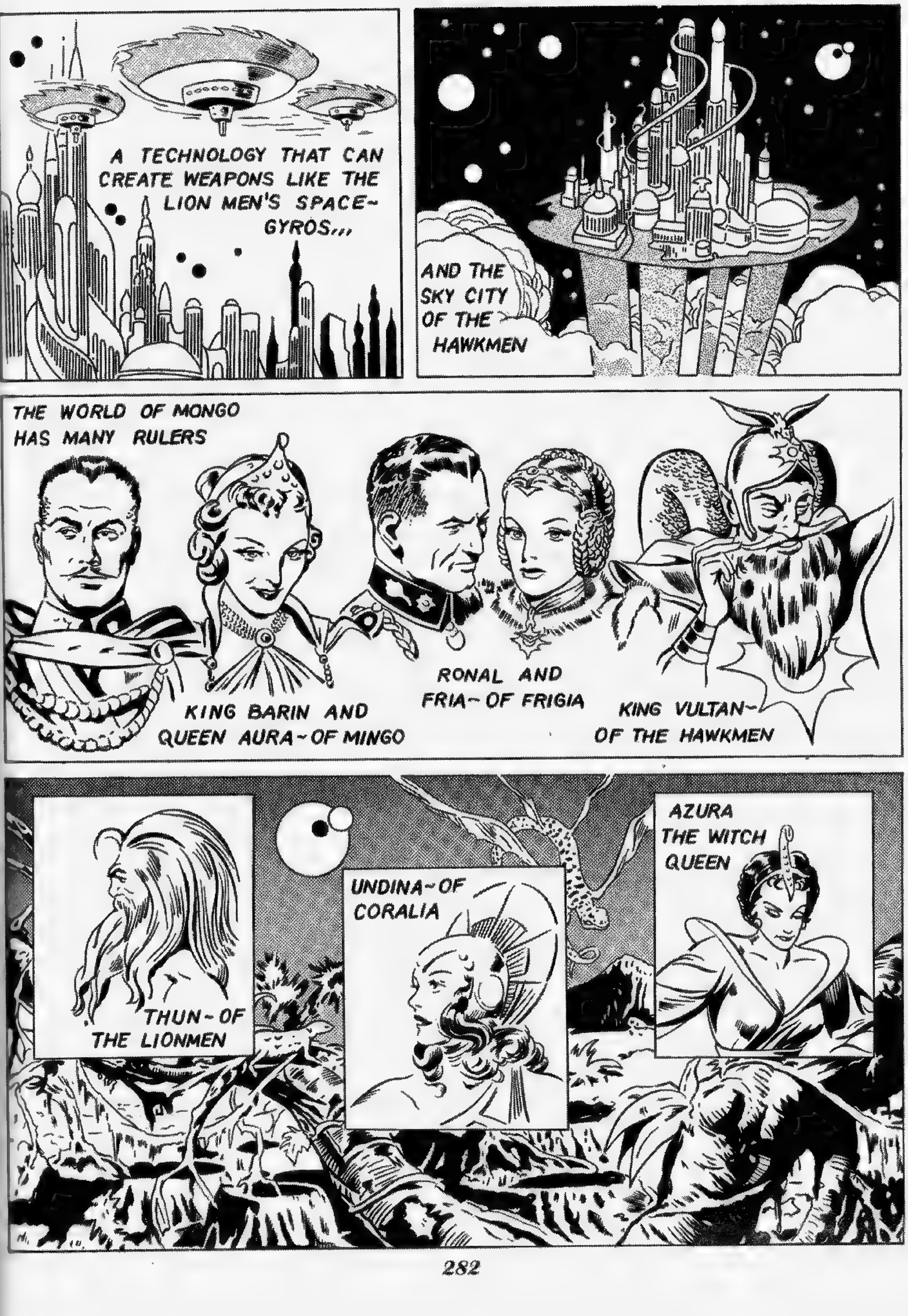
FLASH GORDON

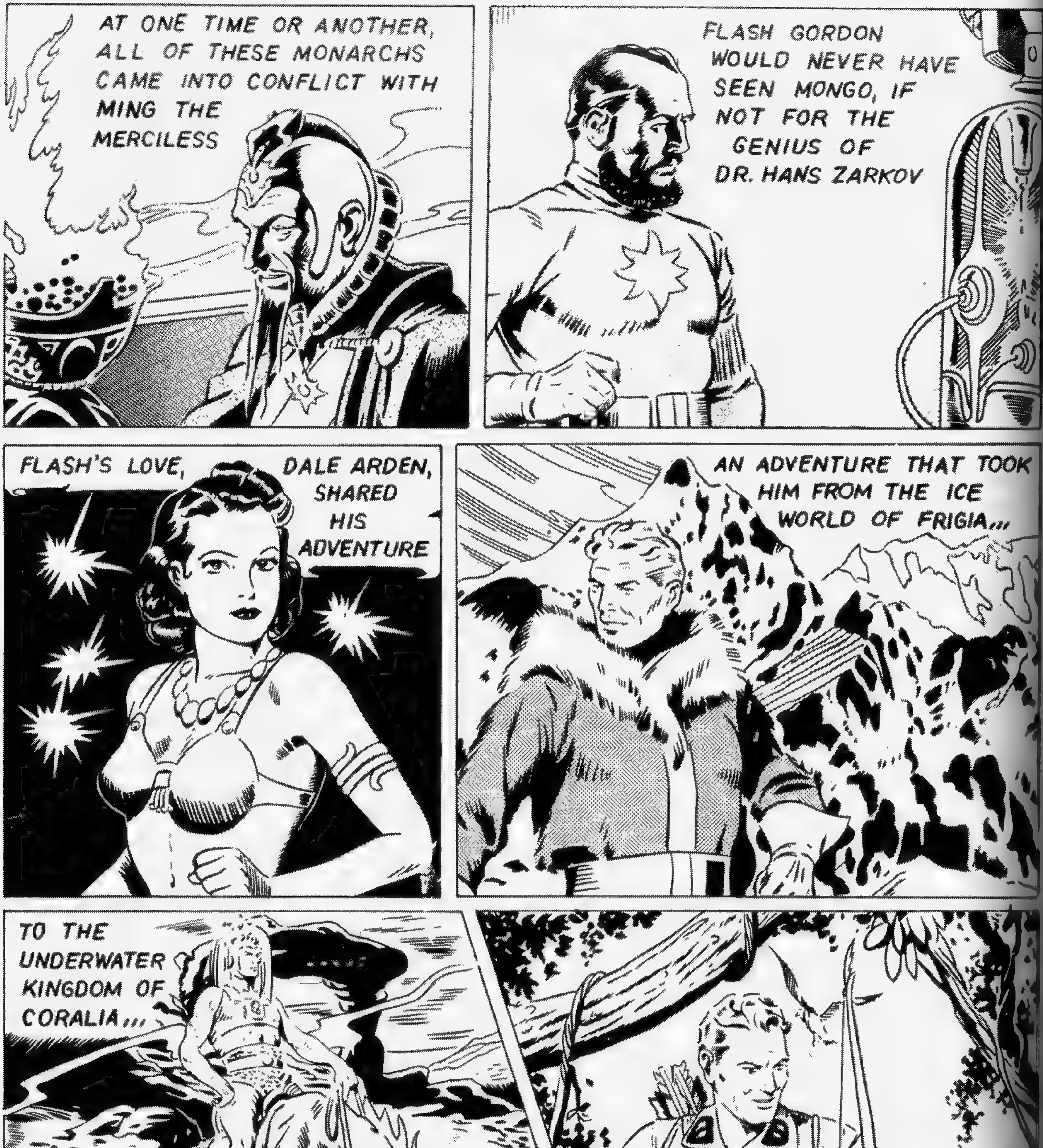


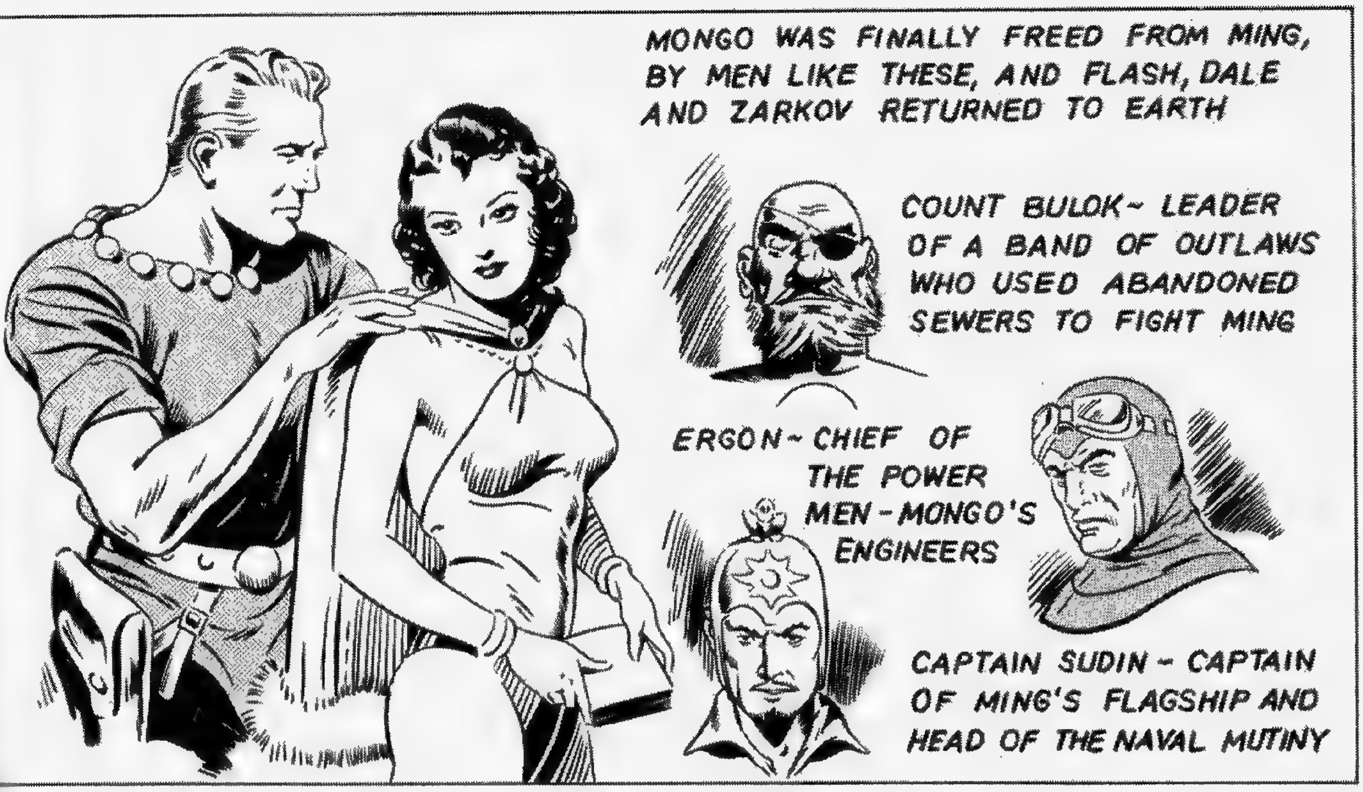
SINCE ITS BEGINNING IN 1934, THE FLASH GORDON STRIP INTRODUCED MANY FASCINATING PEOPLE AND PLACES. MONGO IS A WORLD OF MANY RACES, RANGING FROM THE PRIMITIVE TO THE SUPER SCIENTIFIC. RANGED WITH TOWERING MOUNTAINS, AREAS OF VOLCANIC ACTIVITY AND LUSH VEGETATION OF GIGANTIC PROPORTIONS, HUGE REPTILES STILL WALK THE LAND.

THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF LOOK AT THE PLANET MONGO!


MONGO IS A WORLD WHERE MONSTERS ROAM
HOWEVER, NOT ALL MONSTERS ARE PRE-HISTORIC
THERE IS THE TYRANT MING
AND THE THRONE USURPER BRAZOR
MONGO IS ALSO A WORLD OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY


A TECHNOLOGY THAT CAN CREATE WEAPONS LIKE THE LION MEN'S SPACE-GYROS...
AND THE SKY CITY OF THE HAWKMEN
THE WORLD OF MONGO HAS MANY RULERS
KING BARIN AND QUEEN AURA-OF MINGO
RONAL AND FRIA-OF FRIGIA
KING VULTAN-OF THE HAWKMEN
THUN-OF THE LIONMEN
UNDINA-OF CORALIA
AZURA THE WITCH QUEEN


AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, ALL OF THESE MONARCHS CAME INTO CONFLICT WITH MING THE MERCILESS
FLASH GORDON WOULD NEVER HAVE SEEN MONGO, IF NOT FOR THE GENIUS OF DR. HANS ZARKOV
FLASH'S LOVE, DALE ARDEN, SHARED HIS ADVENTURE
AN ADVENTURE THAT TOOK HIM FROM THE ICE WORLD OF FRIGIA...
TO THE UNDERWATER KINGDOM OF CORALIA...
AND THE FOREST KINGDOM OF ARBORIA

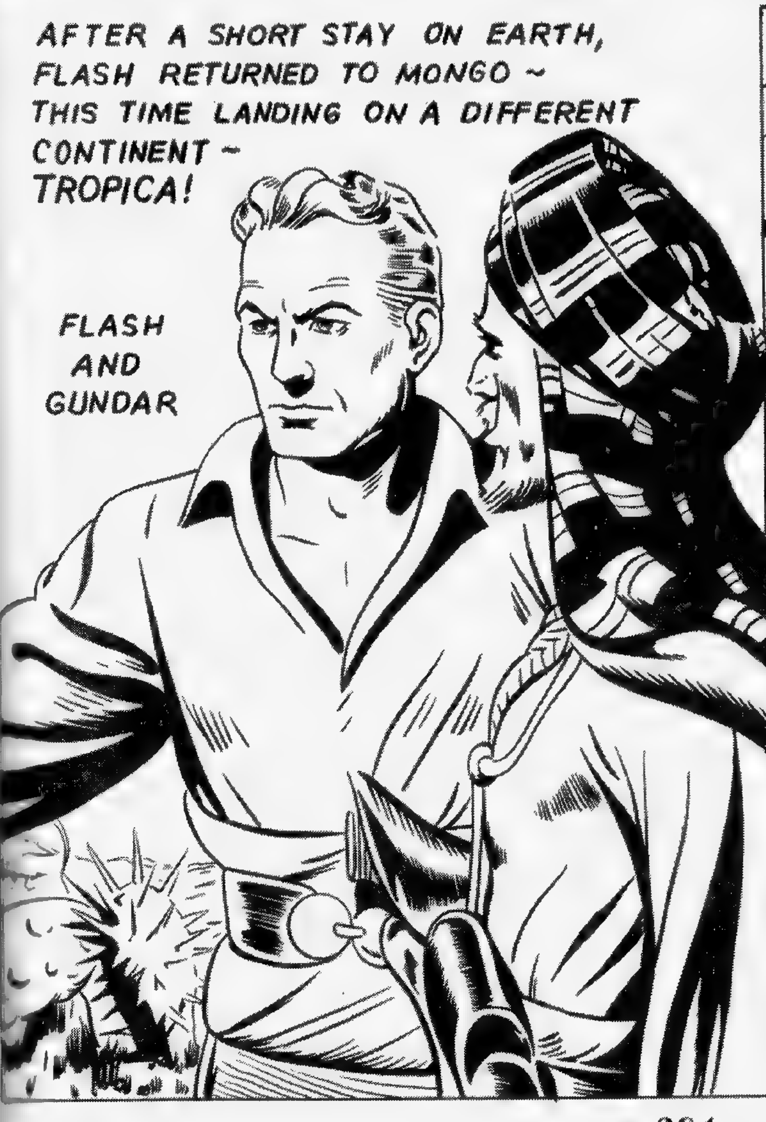


MONGO WAS FINALLY FREED FROM MING, BY MEN LIKE THESE, AND FLASH, DALE AND ZARKOV RETURNED TO EARTH

COUNT BULOK ~ LEADER OF A BAND OF OUTLAWS WHO USED ABANDONED SEWERS TO FIGHT MING

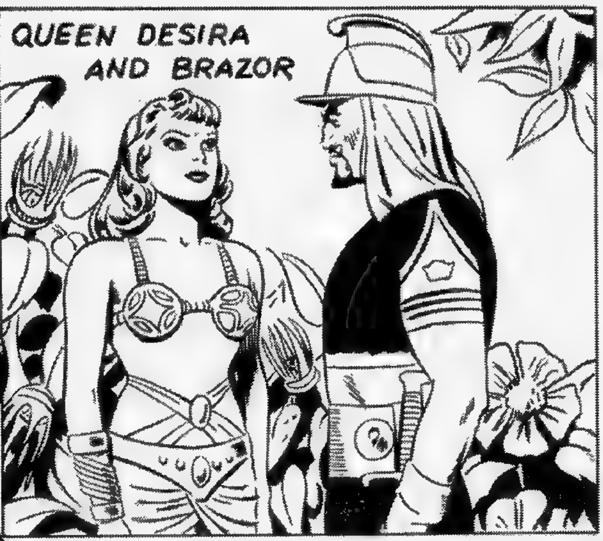
ERGON ~ CHIEF OF THE POWER MEN - MONGO'S ENGINEERS

CAPTAIN SUDIN ~ CAPTAIN OF MING'S FLAGSHIP AND HEAD OF THE NAVAL MUTINY



AFTER A SHORT STAY ON EARTH, FLASH RETURNED TO MONGO ~ THIS TIME LANDING ON A DIFFERENT CONTINENT ~ TROPICA!

FLASH AND GUNDAR



QUEEN DESIRA AND BRAZOR

DESIRA'S THRONE HAD BEEN TAKEN OVER BY BRAZOR ~ FLASH RESCUED DESIRA AND WITH THE AID OF THE DESERT BANDIT GUNDAR, HE RESTORED HER TO THE THRONE! FLASH GORDON, ~HERO OF MONGO~

Flash & Dale & Tony & Azura

(continued from page 38)

rest. That episode is "The Power Men of Mongo." All the classic elements are in this episode. A struggle for freedom, betrayal, captivity, lost love and found love, and an uncommon heroism shown by the common people. Flash is dying in an airless coffin. All seems lost. Bang! Ming is overthrown in the middle of the night. He sits on his ass dumbfounded. A deserved, highly satisfying fate. No wonder the episode is my favorite.

With Ming disposed of, a change of pace was definetely called for. Alex Raymond sent his planet-conquering hero back to his own home world for a clash with the Red Sword Invaders. But Earth was much too mundane, compared to the exotic lands of Mongo and, before too long, Flash and company were returning to their adopted planet. The second series of adventures on Mongo is worthy of note. They are exciting, well-told stories. They are not, however, up to the standards set by the earlier adventures. The major reason for the superiority of the first stories is that the later adventures lack a villain comparable to Ming the Merciless. Ming was all powerful. Before Flash Gordon entered his life, Ming was unchallenged by man or beast. He had Flash outclassed from the very begining. Theirs was a touch-and-go battle, with the outcome in doubt from Sunday to Sunday. On his return to Mongo, Flash was battling a lesser grade of fiend. We knew he was going to win against him. In the first series, the smart money was on Ming all the way.

Buck Rogers, the other (and first) science-fantasy adventurer in the newspapers, started out with the same kind of massive challenge that Flash faced. Buck had a world to save from tyranny also. But the Mongols were pickpockets compared to Ming. They were soon disposed of. It took over six years to bring Ming to justice, and he went down fighting. Both had story lines of equal potential; Alex Raymond simply made more of his strip's potential than Phil Nowlan and Dick Calkins did of theirs. As for artwork, there never was any competition. Dick Calkins drew appealing, but crude strips. Alex Raymond illustrated. With a vengeance.

I personally prefered Raymond's artwork during his "The Tournament of Mongo" episode. At this time, for all its beauty, the strip has a basic, barbaric appeal. Armies were forgotten. Individuals had stolen the stage for individual combat and the artwork was reflecting this intense, physical combat between two men. Even the crowd scenes reflected this individual struggle. I don't think there has been another comic strip fight to match this one.

When Alex Raymond left Flash Gordon, the strip lost its greatness. Alex Raymond, the writer, the artist, had made Flash Gordon. Without him, the strip was lackluster. It remained that way until 1966 when Al Williamson wrote and drew Flash Gordon #1 for the new line of King Comics. I don't believe there's another heir to Alex Raymond today. I doubt there'll be one tomorrow. The only shortcoming in Al Williamson's three issues of Flash Gordon was that it lacked the massive challenge, the epic element.

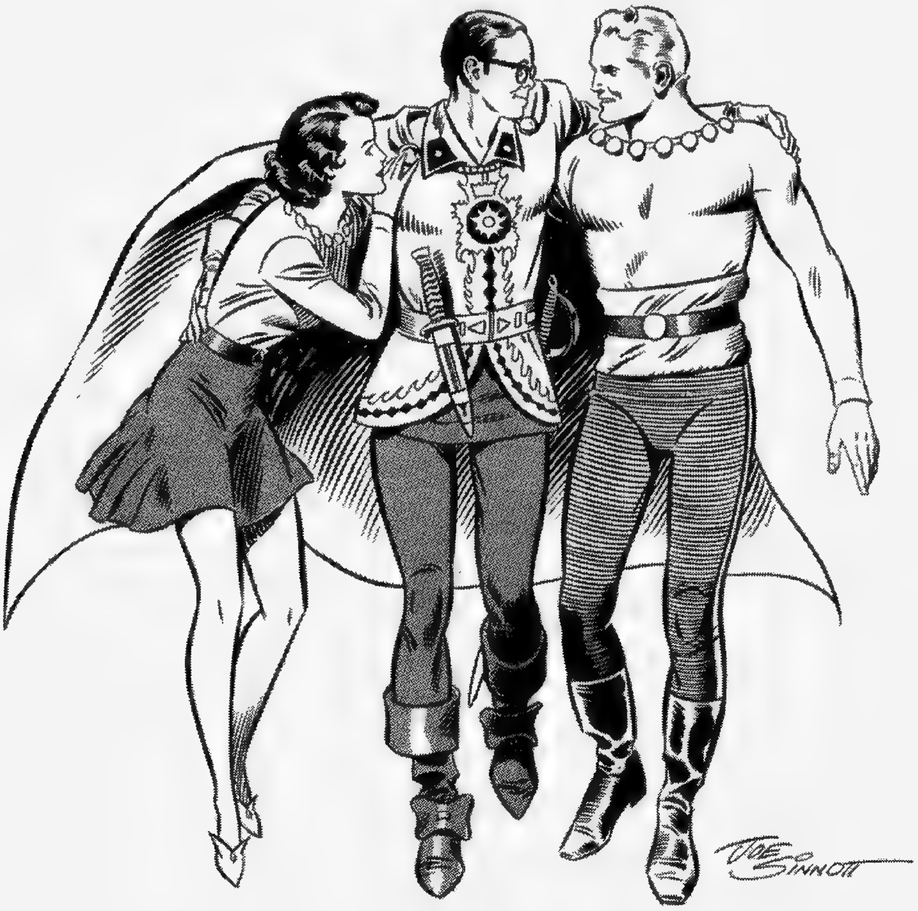
It is this epic element that made Flash Gordon the finest adventure strip ever created. It is this epic element that will restore Flash Gordon to greatness. Someday.

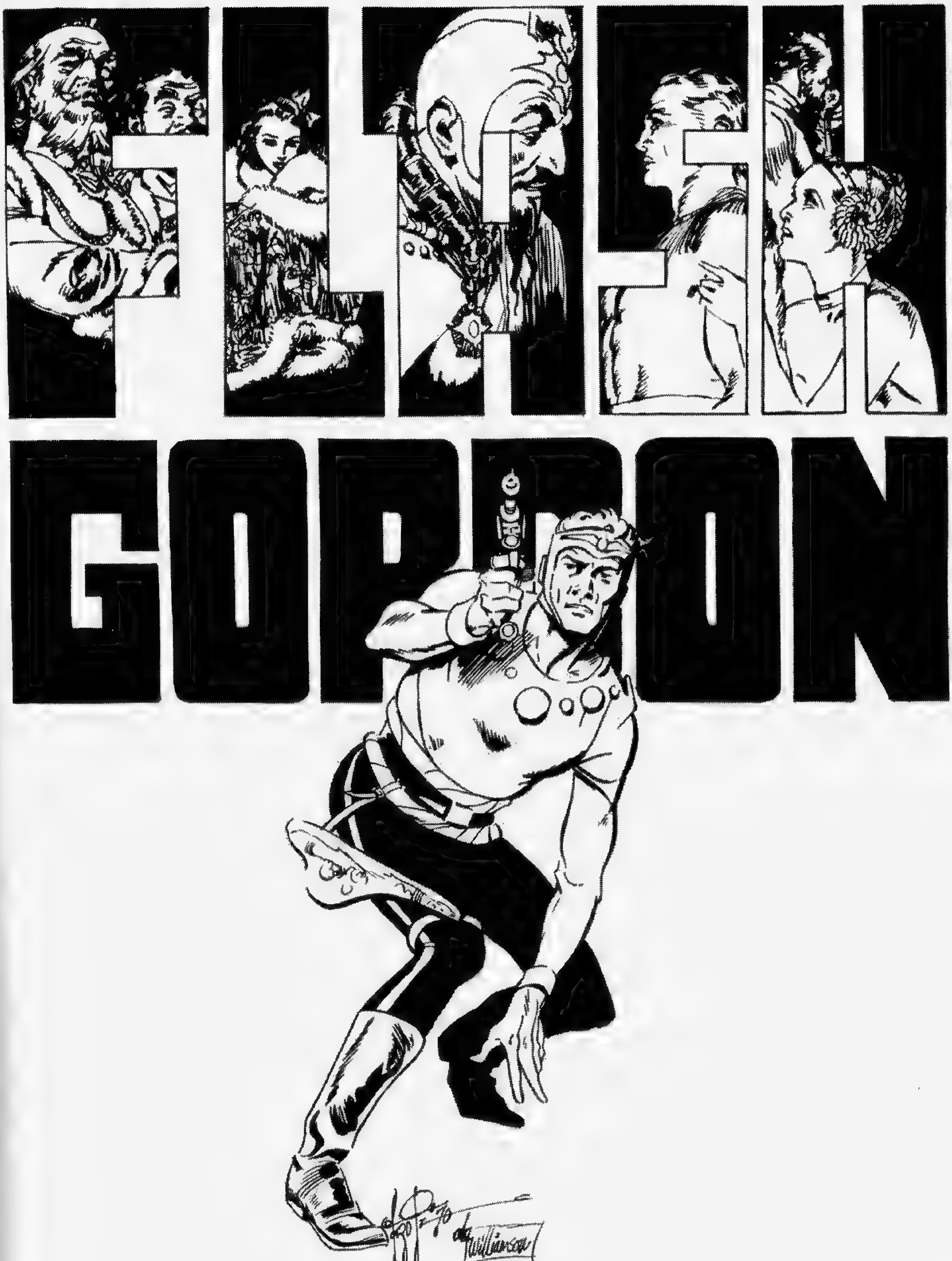
--Tony Isabella

To close this Flash Gordon issue, I feel a mention of Buster Crabbe, the star of the Flash Gordon films, is in order.

Buster Crabbe, was born Clarence Linden Crabe. At the time the serials were made he stood 6' 1" weighed 188 lbs., had a 45" chest, 32" waist, and 16" biceps, for all you data lovers. A graduate of the University of Southern California in 1932, he scored that year as a swimming champion in the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. In 1934, he made a name for himself, when he starred in the feature movie "Tarzan the Fearless." Two years later, he was signed for the lead in Flash Gordon. After the first two serials, Buster became Bhok Rogers for 12 more chapters of outer space action. In the mid-1950's Buster starred as Captain Gallant of the Foreign Legion, along with his son, Cullen "Cuffy" Crabbe. Buster has since become executive director of a swimming pool construction firm and has guided Cascade Industries to a leading position in that field.

Well, I see by the illustration below, that two friends of mine have dropped by. I'm going to take a little trip with them. See you next issue gang! - MLG.

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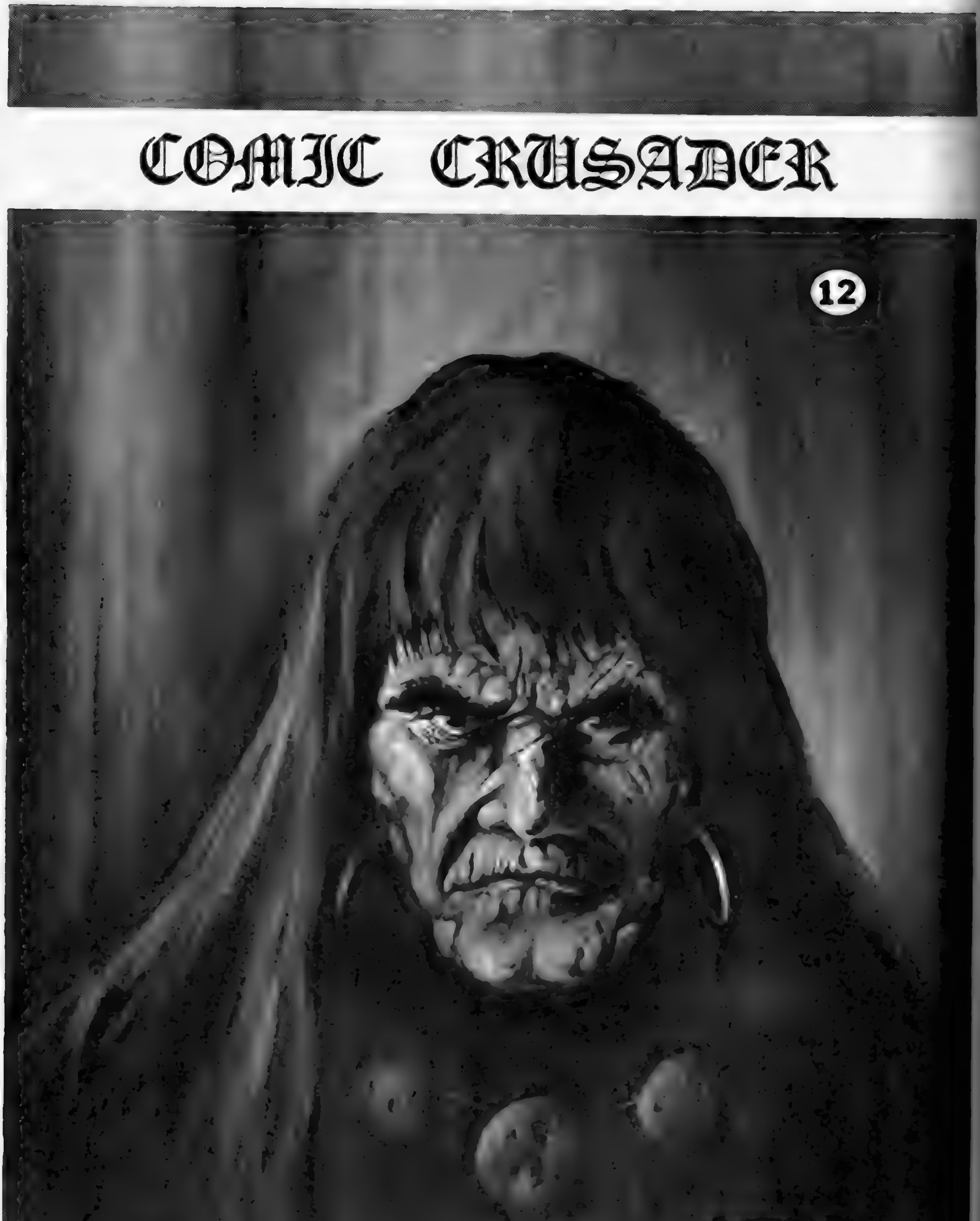
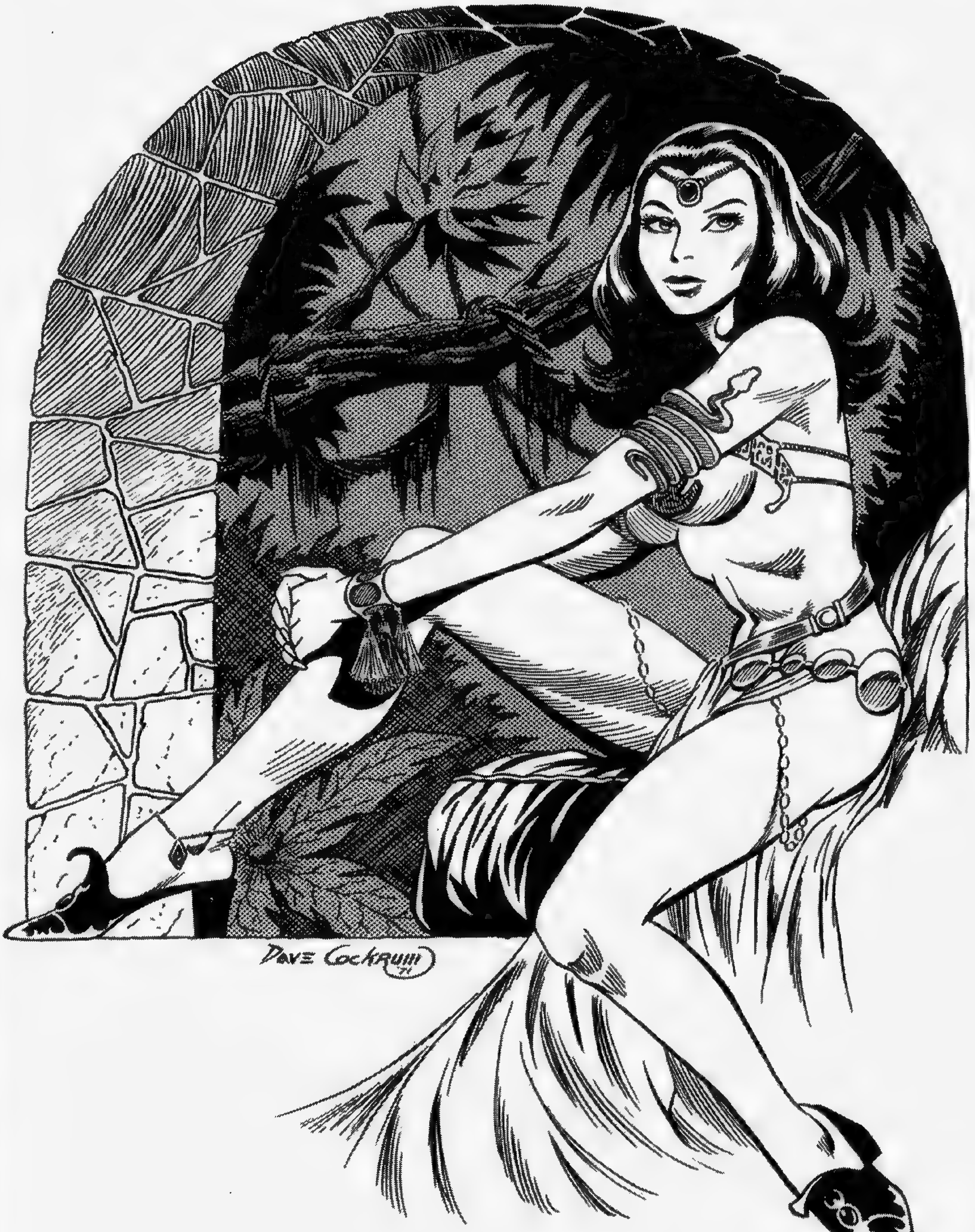

COMIC CRUSADER
12
JUANILLO

WELCOME
TO A BARBARIC ISSUE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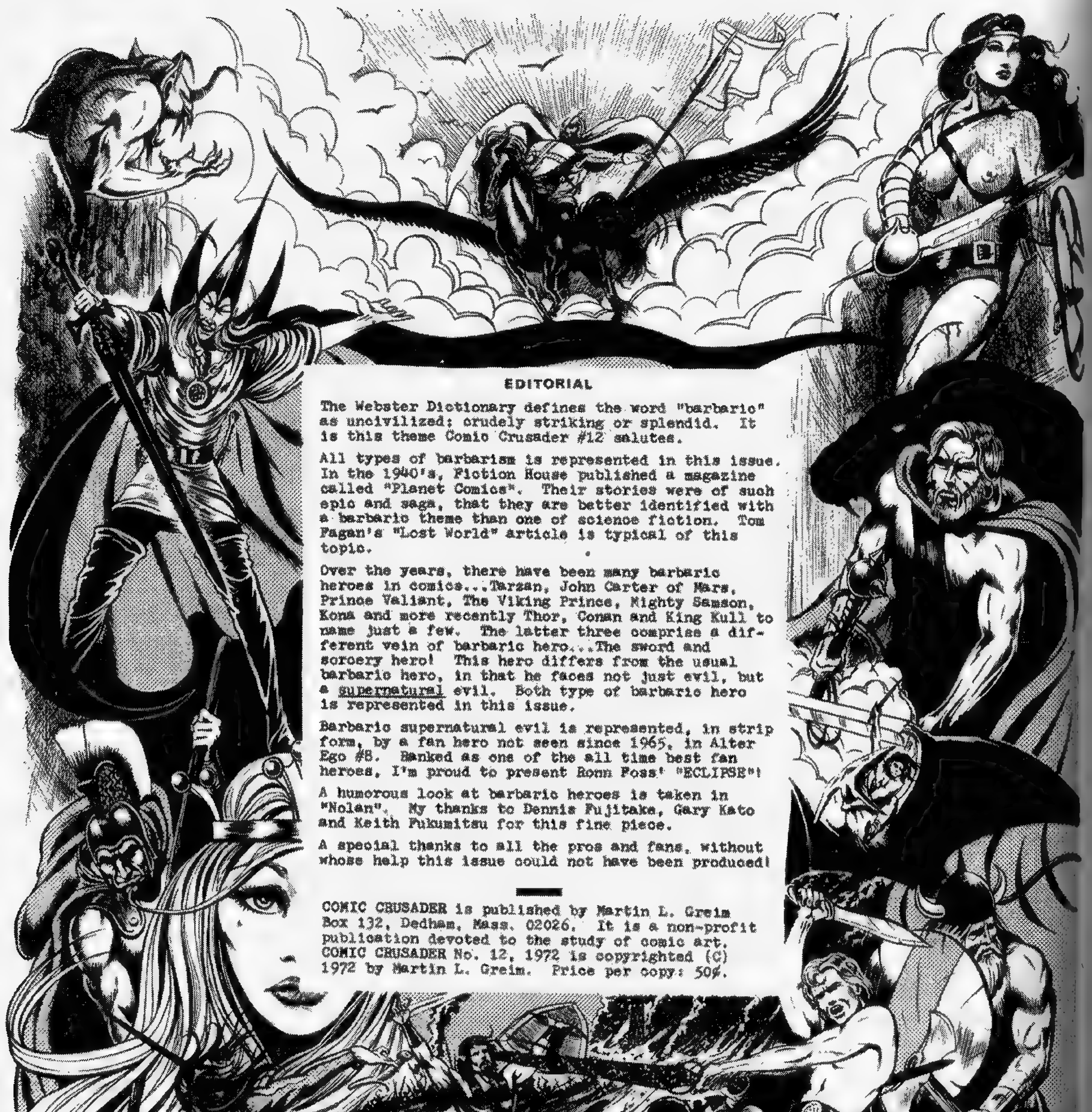

EDITORIAL

The Webster Dictionary defines the word "barbaric" as uncivilized: crudely striking or splendid. It is this theme Comic Crusader #12 salutes.

All types of barbarism is represented in this issue. In the 1940's, Fiction House published a magazine called "Planet Comics". Their stories were of such epic and saga, that they are better identified with a barbaric theme than one of science fiction. Tom Fagan's "Lost World" article is typical of this topic.

Over the years, there have been many barbaric heroes in comics...Tarzan, John Carter of Mars, Prince Valiant, The Viking Prince, Mighty Samson, Kona and more recently Thor, Conan and King Kull to name just a few. The latter three comprise a different vein of barbaric hero...The sword and sorcery hero! This hero differs from the usual barbaric hero, in that he faces not just evil, but a supernatural evil. Both type of barbaric hero is represented in this issue.

Barbaric supernatural evil is represented, in strip form, by a fan hero not seen since 1965, in Alter Ego #8. Ranked as one of the all time best fan heroes, I'm proud to present Ronn Foss' "ECLIPSE"!

A humorous look at barbaric heroes is taken in "Nolan". My thanks to Dennis Fujitake, Gary Kato and Keith Fukumitsu for this fine piece.

A special thanks to all the pros and fans, without whose help this issue could not have been produced!

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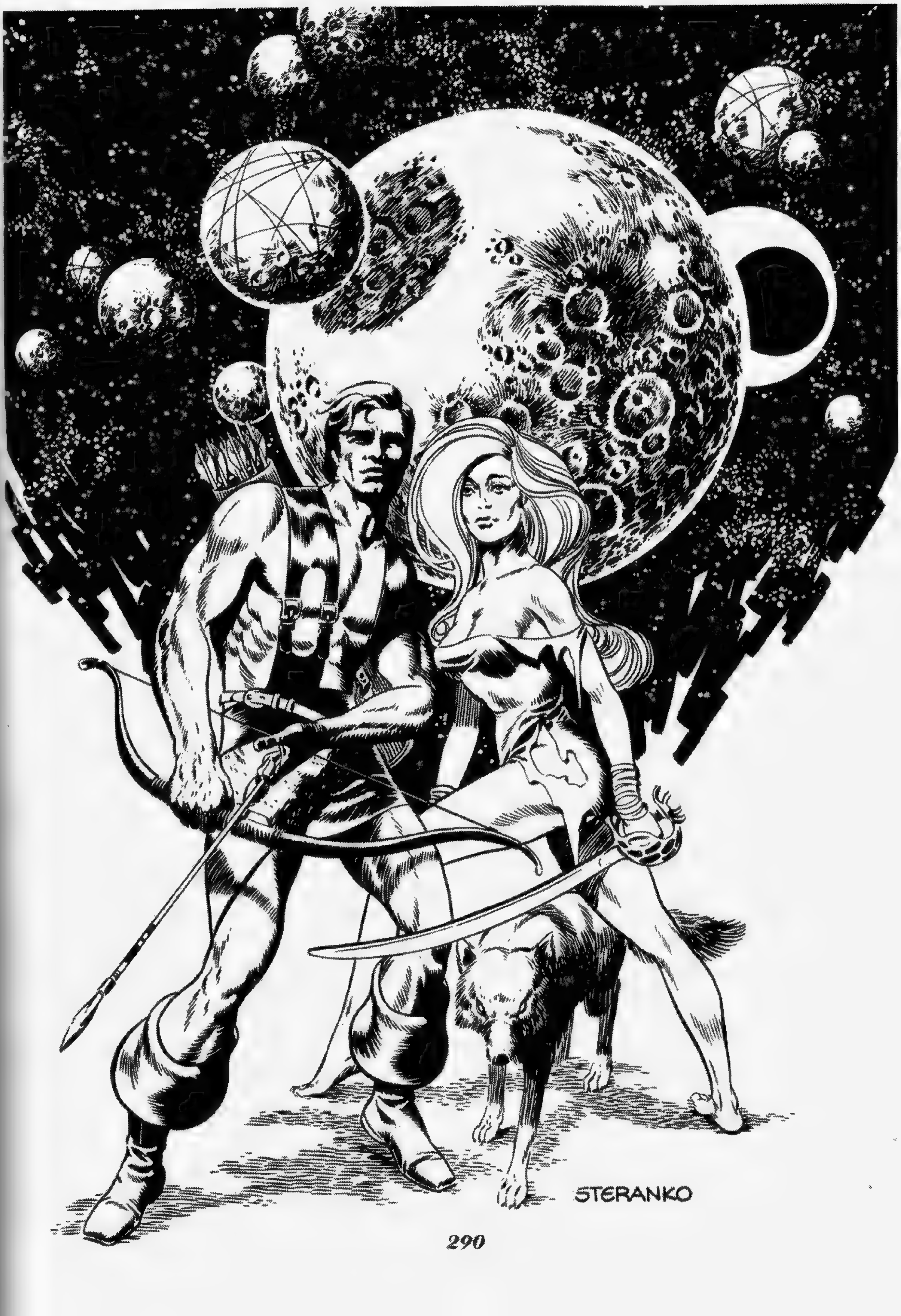

STERANKO

What follows here will be a source of amusement to some; a cause for concern to others. In the light of unexplained recent events, COMIC CRUSADER reserves judgement and comment until a later date...if indeed, there is to be a future different from that hinted at in the curious account about to be related. Instead we present here, uncut and unexpurgerated, a manuscript sent us by Miss Deana Fagan, written by her father and found on the eve of his yet unsolved disappearance.

Martin L. Greim,
Publisher-Editor
COMIC CRUSADER

A further note....Because of the authors absence to title the work himself, COMIC CRUSADER has chosen to call this remarkable piece:

TOM FAGAN... THE LAST WORDS OF THESE ARE!

The others are asleep now and I am downstairs alone in the great old house, my only company being Diablo and Satan, my two German shepherds. Diablo is particularly restless. Perhaps, he senses my growing uneasiness, for intermittently he gets up to look out the dining room window, a low growl churning up from his throat as he surveys a moon-drenched landscape of fields and the darkening forest beyond.

I, myself, have gone to the window several times, afraid of what I might see, but more afraid even of what I do not see. I can not shake off the feeling someone or something is watching. How else can I explain the dark footprints that stand out vividly in the freshly fallen snow...footprints that lead toward the house, but not away!

Neither have I told anyone of the strange shimmering sled I saw three nights past skimming over the frozen fields. A snowmobile? I hardly think so. Certainly there was no ripsaw motor noise. Indeed, the vehicle moved without sound and with amazing swiftness, glowing with an unearthly light that highlighted for a moment the face of its driver.

True the night was cold, but it wasn't that which made me shiver involuntarily. The shudder came as I caught a glimpse of those features...a face of green made hideous with wrinkles running the length of its countenance...hellish eyes, gleaming with an evil light of their own from beneath a strangely spiked helmet. The stare that greeted me was so malevolent, I looked away for an instant. In the few seconds that elapsed, when I looked up the sled, if that is what it can be called, was gone. And no track marked its passage. The powdered snow lay undisturbed as far as the eye could see.

There have been other happenings too that I shall not detail here. Instead, I intend to write this article and hope that I am not the victim of an overwrought imagination, though I know that not to be true.

I shall write the article Martin Greim has requested and on the morrow send it to him, to do with as he likes. I will also send him the copies of Planet Comics lent for research purposes. If those damnable books were mine, I would gladly consign them to the flames for I have a growing conviction they hold a secret so terrifying as to be unbelievable by its very implication.

Call it premonition, paranormal, clairvoyancy or what have you, but when Martin asked me to do an article on the LOST WORLD series in Planet, I wanted no part of it. Why? That I can't explain. Chalk it up to bad vibes. However, Martin is a most persistent fellow and since he had already contacted Jim Steranko to do the key illustration for the piece, I found myself reluctantly accepting the assignment. God knows I wish now I had never agreed no matter the ill feelings it might have caused.

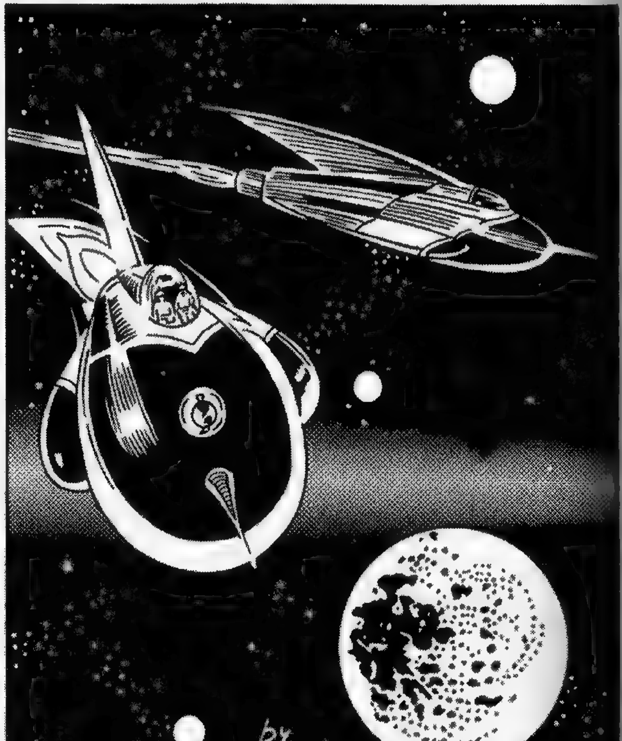
Finally, after several letters and a number of anxious phone calls from Martin, inquiring when he could expect the article, I could find no further excuse but to start reading the sizable collection of Planet Comics sent me. This I did with a feeling, even then, of apprehension.

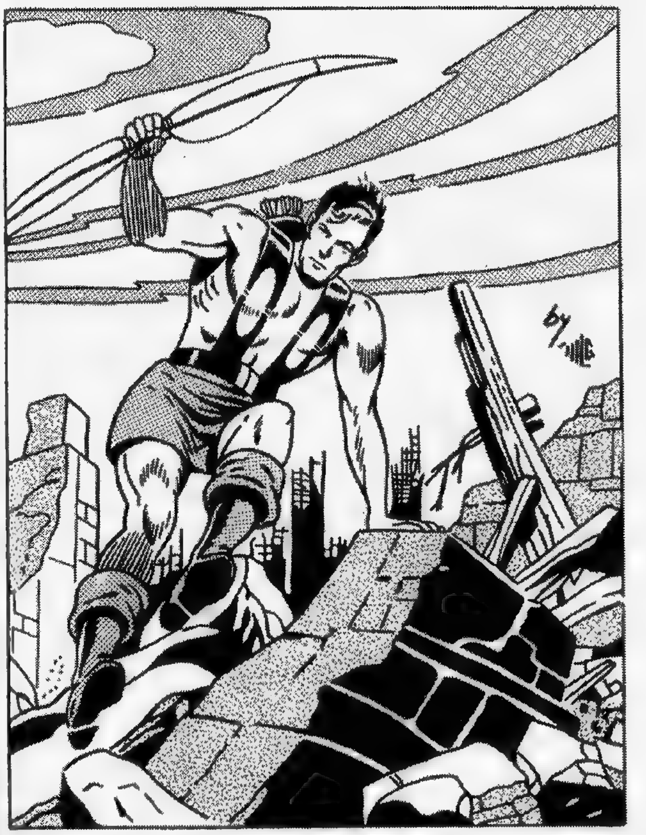
Ordinarily, comic reading is a great pleasure to me and by rights these remanants of the Golden Age should have been pure joy to go through at leisure and write upon in detail. Instead the task was a repugnant one even though the stories were as the early logos proclaimed, "Weird Adventures On Other Worlds---The Universe Of The Future." Planet, from the few issues I had read previously, was much as I remembered it...pure space opera...abounding with overblown wenches with pectoral muscles to stagger the imagination, herculean-type heroes and goggle-eyed groupies from the outer limits.

Auro, Lord of Jupiter, was as flaccid as I recalled him, Star Pirate non-amusing as ever; Mysta of the Moon dull beyond belief; and Futura...well only the art saved her ...the story line as confusing and difficult to follow as always, but the anatomy lessons were grand.

Lost World, though, was a different matter. Oddly enough, three decades of time had failed to dim their initial fascination. In fact, if anything, it increased it and somehow the series seemed strangely prophetic. Too much so, perhaps! To read the series in its entirety is a revealation. Or was the series ever really completed, for after 12 years of coming out on the 10th of the month "every other month", the stories suddenly went into reprint without warning, and with a good many questions left unanswered. I can not help but now wonder if perhaps, the writer or writers were unknowingly coming all too close to the truth and this rather than econimics caused the natural progression to cease.

Volta Patrol





Hunt Bowman

It is rather strange considering the Lost World series, toward the last, were dealing not with the Thirty-Third Century but with events supposedly taking place in 1975! Bear this in mind if you will, for now 1975 is but three years hence.

However, let me review "The Lost World" from its beginnings. I leave it up to whomever may read this to form their own conclusions and conjectures. Let us hope I am wrong in the beliefs I have formed.

As a strip, Lost World gave little promise in its initial appearance in Planet Comics. The issue is No. 21 and it is dated November, 1942. Not even mentioned on the cover, the reader must turn to Page 35 of the magazine to read the first eight pages that served as a shakey premise destined to blast Lost World into prominence as Planet's leading feature. That such would happen is hardly indicated in the opening tale.

The story begins: "Only one man could win the fight for survival on earth in the 33rd century...This superb specimen is Hunt Bowman - a lonely archer knowing nothing of his forebearers' sciences...But Hunt's tireless search for a human mate reaches a fantastic climax when a wild voyage through space ends on a world the universe forgot!"

Planet wars have ravaged earth with the result it is no longer "inhabited by human life." The very next panel offers a contradiction, for "on the outskirts of Chicago's ruins a lone archer stalks deer with his powerful longbow - Hunt Bowman, the last human on earth."

It is a Hunt Bowman garbed far different than his readers are soon come to recognize him. Bowman wears a green leotard and finger-tip length cloak of scarlet. Moccasins, a quiver filled with yellow-feathered arrows, and a bow with a "170 pount pull," complete the costume. In rapid succession, the reader is introduced to Lyssa, "Queen of the Lost World", whose people "are descendants of early space voyages from earth", and her captors, the "brutes from Volta".

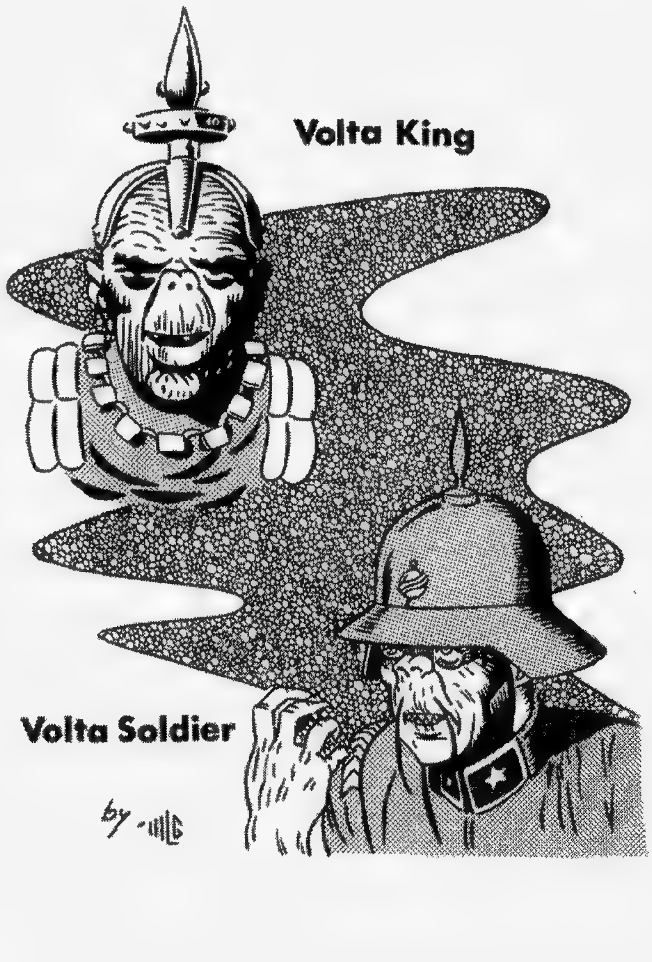
Thinks Lyssa on seeing Hunt, "What a fine looking fellow. Perhaps he can help me to escape these rogues." Lyssa is quite correct in this snap judgement, albeit her stilted delivery of the thought. However, first Hunt is taken captive aboard the Volta spacecraft. The purpose, he and Lyssa are to be put on public exhibit with a prior stipulation expressed by the Volta leader: "...We will starve him almost to death, so our people will think the humans were an inferior race!" Before he is downed by a noxious gas, Hunt hammers a few blows for humanity and a Volta underling responds with a lusty "EHZK!" as an arrow "drops him in his tracks." As the spacecraft "zooms off earth, powered by electrodynamic energy," Hunt revives to find himself shackled and a prisoner. Easily he breaks the manacles, his first thought: "Ah! That wasn't hard! I must get free and find that beautiful woman captive." Coincidentally, she is standing right behind him and whispers in his ear, "You haven't far to look!"

In the fight that ensues, Hunt chain whips Volta crew members into submission and the Volta leader and his men "in frantic haste" flee in "a space lifeboat," leaving Hunt and Lyssa "at the mercy of the runaway space ship." Under Lyssa's guidance, Hunt manages to reach the Lost World in a grinding crash landing. His reception from Lyssa's subjects is less than friendly, as is an encounter with "a fierce man-eating spirax," a dread beast which Hunt manages to kill winning the respect of the "cavemen," who were his enemies. All except the scheming Basil, who tried to engineer Hunt's death and that of Lyssa. Basil had been in line for the kingship of the Lost World, but for his treachery he is to be denied this privilege. Declares Lyssa: "You saved our lives, Hunt! Would you like to share my reign as king!" Replies Hunt, "Er...Well, Lyssa - Yes, but your men dislike me." Lyssa reassures: "They won't anymore! Look ...The traitor Basil is fleeing. He chooses to risk death by the Spiraxes than to face me and you!" To which Hunt responds: "An arrow would stop him. But in my lonely life on earth I vowed never to kill a human. I'm keeping that pledge."

Nothing frightening about that story? Rather ho-humish you say? True, but is there anything about an infant that causes alarm, fear for one's own safety? No, it is the grownup that is to be feared and Hunt Bowman, Lyssa and The Lost World had a lot of growing up to do in the nex few issues. After all, the strip was in its infancy stage, as far as Fiction House Publications was concerned and artists and writers seemed to have little idea what direction the saga is taking.

For instance, in the very next issue, (January, 1943; No. 22) the story resumes with Hunt this time clad in a black tunic, set off by yellow trim, green tights, boots, leather wrist bands and of course, the long bow. Lyssa wears a daring see-through dress and the inevitable high heels. Satorial splendor for the Lost World indeed, considering the cavemen manage to escape indecent exposure with only the rawest and raggiest of furs.

Hunt seeks a means to cross "The Valley of Fire" which separates Lyssa's tribe from another band of "lost earthmen". Only by uniting the two tribes is their hope "to



save the universe from Volta's master plan of extermination". Says Hunt, "Let's trek over by the valley now." Easier said than done. How to cross the flaming barrier. The answer comes from "Volta, the Gibraltar Planet of the Conquerors." Even now streaking toward the Lost World is Igor and a crew of "drug-soaked scum" of four. The command from Volta's warlord, Yak Bar: "Scour the universe for that wreck and bring back proof if the earthman and that queen survived. I want their bodies dead or alive!"

It was a command not to be carried out, though Igor and his squad of "most cruel killers" did their best to see that it was. In spite of Basil, the renegade, who tried to sell out to the Voltonians, Hunt turned loose a stampeding herd of spiraxes on the would-be executioners and assumed command of the spacecraft. Since Igor presumably was the only one who "alone could find the Lost World", a fake message via "cosmic raydio" to Volta Volta by Hunt and Lyssa averted future threat to the Lost World. Which does seem a bit odd considering it was the Voltamen who had devastated the planet and had killed off all the women except Lyssa in the first place. Nonwithstanding, Hunt and Lyssa now with a Volta ship at their disposal cross the barrier of flames in Issue 23. They take with them, of all people Basil, who once again quickly reverts to trechery. Giant Lauks, toad-like monsters, are the spiraxes on the other side of the vale...and the people there just as unfriendly. Hunt begs the tribe to return to earth with him, but only one tribesman will. A Voltan patrol ship spots them but is repaid by being "exploded into atoms", after Hunt's crew of three figures out how to use the ray guns of the commandeered ship.

"Safe at last, the ship bearing Hunt Bowman, Queen Lyssa and the old man of the Pale People swoop in onto earth." Their first sight...an aerial view of the Statue of Liberty in devastated New York harbor.

Prior to leaving the Lost World, Hunt had told the old man, "There is no one left on earth now!" meaning human beings. He was to be proven wrong...very wrong! (It would seem Hunt had looked in the wrong places when the series opened, or not very hard at all!) There were earth people alright and there were Volta patrols and Voltonian outposts...though up to now none of these had been indicated to exist on Mother Earth.

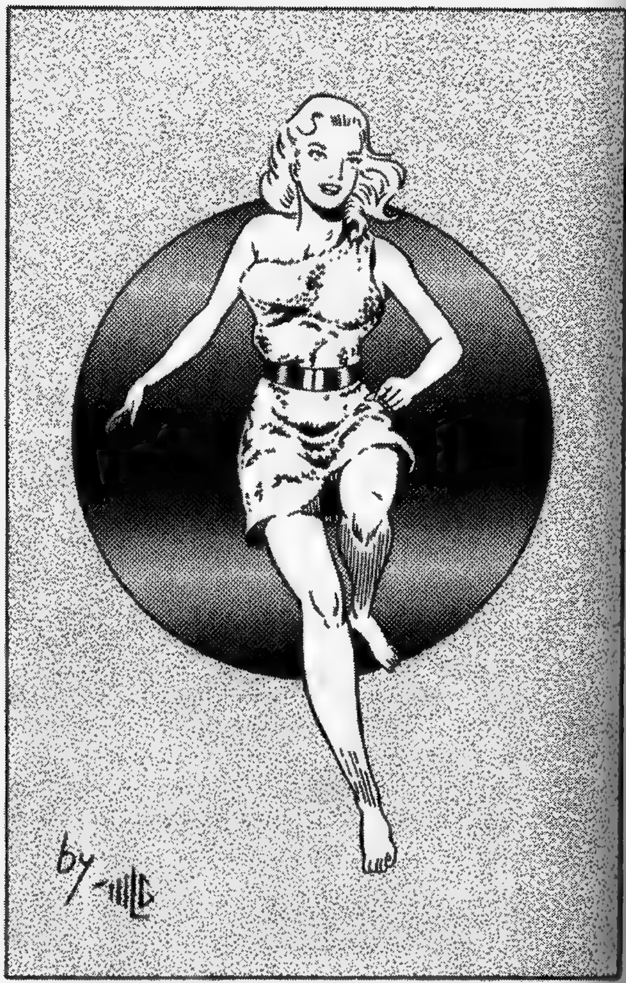
While circling Central Park, the trio sail over grizzlies, elks, vultures and snarling lions, all "progenerated from the zoo." The danger is not from these beasts however, it comes in the form of an "electron blast" from an unscathed skyscraper. The spacecraft lurches and sweeps down desolate Eighth Avenue, on past the scattered skeleton of the Brooklyn Bridge and lands on Bedlos Island, where the three take refuge in "the lofty sentinel of a forgotten freedom"...namely the Statue of Liberty.

A Volta patrol squad lands almost immediately after, it's occupants being "the Kodip men from Volta," who retreat with alacrity as the great longbow sends feathered shafts of death at and through the backs of their fleeing figures. A second Volta ship zooms in for a landing and it is the turn of the humans for flight.

Hardly is their ship off the ground, when an electron blast from below short circuits its power system. Hunt, Lyssa and the old man dive clear and under cover of darkness escape detection by skyborne searchlights and drifting with the rising tide they make the comparative safety of the shore. There they spot a lantern glow gleaming dully from an anchor post of the Brooklyn Bridge. It is not a Volta sentry who has lighted the lantern, no..."to their amazement an earthman appears to greet them."

The white-bearded patriarch is Maxson 'the hermit' who offers them sanctuary in a cleverly concealed chamber within the bridge foundation. At dawn, while searching for food, Lyssa falls into the green-skinned grasp of lurking Kodips. Hunt, too, is seized but lashing out with his fists he sends two Kodips sprawling backwards into a flooded pit, where "their strange bodies displacing more weight than water, (they) sink like stones." A third Kodip dies with an arrow in the back, but an electron blast shot from ambush shocks Hunt into unconsciousness and he is left for dead as Lyssa is hurried away.

Revived by Maxson, (incidentally the old man of the pale people is no longer in the story, for no given reason) Hunt and the hermit go to a laboratory where Maxson has previously been experimenting with "an atom smasher." With Maxson doing the thinking and Hunt pulling the generator switches, the hermit fashions ray-proof shields...and with this protection they prepare to do battle with the Kodips and keep Lyssa's honor intact. They are successful in both missions. Kodips are tumbled into blue-green watery graves. The great longbow is brought into play and "three arrows fly in as few seconds...each scoring a kill..." accounting for three more of the enemy. Ignoring the arrow-riddled corpses, Hunt commandeers their patrol ship and declares that by armoring this new ship with Maxson's anti-ray plate, they can capture scores of Volta warcraft. Maxson nods sagely and adds that Hunt can then recruit earthmen on the Lost World to man the ships. It's a great plan, Hunt agrees, for the humans can amass a fleet to win freedom for earth.



Lyssa

In a follow up story, Maxson continues his research, improving the ray-proof armor as a defense against electron blasts. The hermit has succeeded in armoring two captured Voltan space scout ships and is trying to repair their damaged instrumentation with parts that Hunt and Lyssa have scavenged from the ruins of an earth lab. Unknown by Hunt and Lyssa, and undetected even by Lobo, the wolf dog who now accompanies them, a Volta patrol has observed their actions and follows them to where Maxson is carrying out his work. Debris pried loose by the Voltamen buries Hunt and Lobo in its rubble.

While Lyssa is dragged off, Maxson is killed. To be certain of the hermit's death, a Voltaman deliberately, with his hobnailed boot, stomps the old man's face. Then, and only then, does the patrol leave.

But there is a stirring beneath the fallen timbers and masonry. Hunt Bowman is not dead! More or less unharmed, except for abrasions and contusions, Hunt digs himself out and manages to free Lobo. The wolf dog rallies to the side of his master. Their only thought ...vengeance and to save Lyssa. Systematically, the Volta patrol members are annihilated and Lyssa is freed.

The story in Planet #25 (July, 1943) is but a scant two pages long. It is also one of the best chapters of the entire Lost World series. Set in the ray-blackened ruins of Washington, D.C., it opens with a Voltan patrol trapping Hunt and Lyssa in the ravaged remains of the Academy of Science. Dodging the deadly ray blasts, (no he didn't have the shield) Hunt shoots down half the patrol before his last arrow is gone. Seizing a gun, he manages to bring it into play with "astonishing results." Scathing death wipes out the remainder of the patrol and Hunt and Lyssa read an inscription on the show case where the gun had lain. Lyssa recites aloud: "Reising machine gun model 1943, made available to our armed forces through the purchase of war bonds by freedom loving Americans!" A final panel has this message for Planet readers: "It's fun to read about the future ...but...BUY U.S. WAR BONDS and STAMPS TODAY! And every day for a victorious future! Buy MORE than your share, remember...EVERY DIME COUNTS!" Thus did the reality of the present--World War II--creep into this 1943 tale of the future.

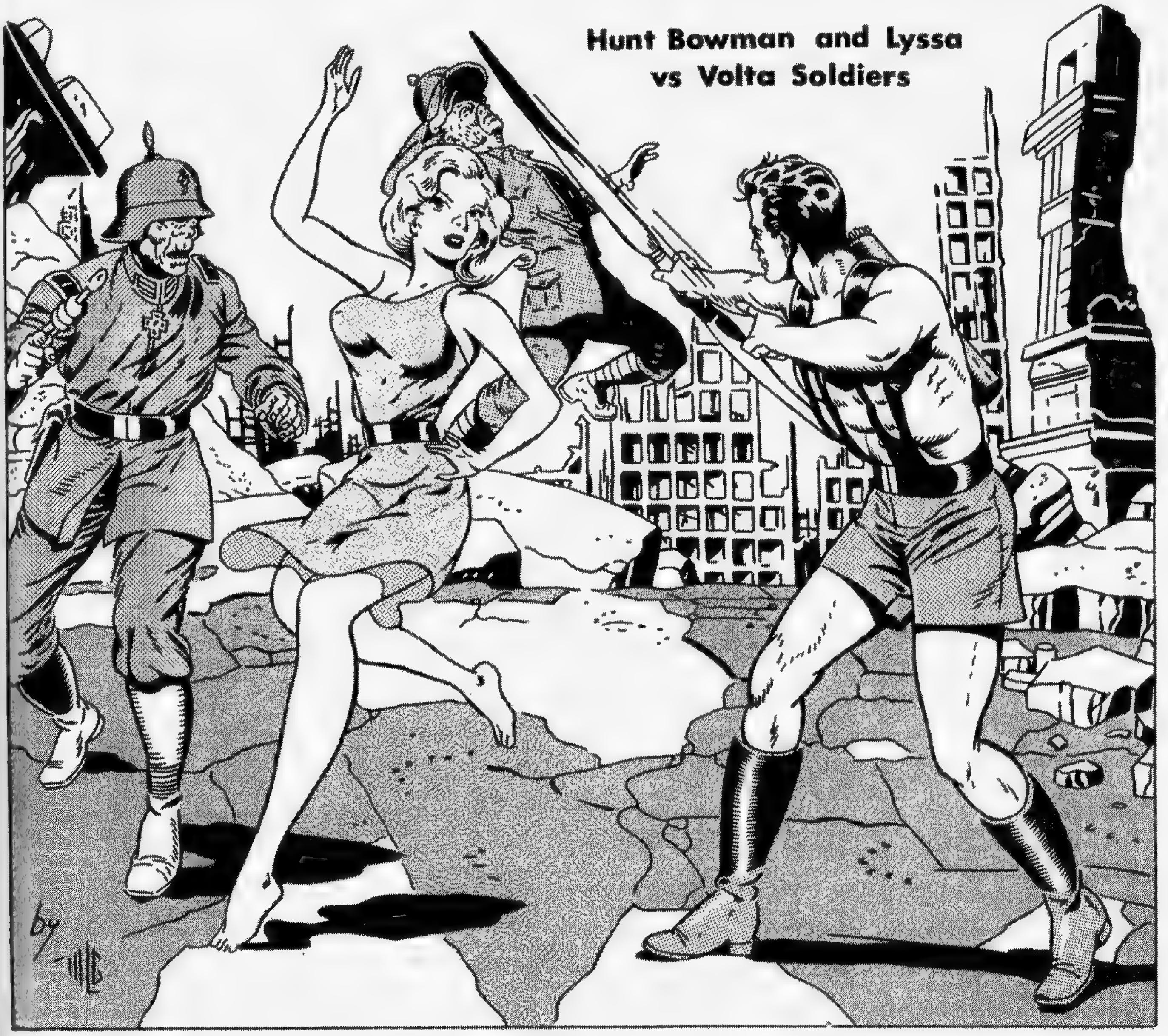
Reality intrudes...the reality of 1972! The dogs have been growling; they are quieted now but stir restlessly in their sleep. Again I have gone to the window. Again there is nothing to see but a cold moon and an eldritch icy landscape. Nothing to see, yes, but a presence to be sensed nontheless. I must hurry to complete this manuscript!

A flock of artists had a hand and brush in bringing Lost World to life on the colorful pages of Planet. Rudy Palais was the main artist in 1942, while in 1943 the names to be recognized were those of Nick Cardy (really Nick Viscardy), Graham Ingels and Rey Pagsilang Isip. Ingels continued working into 1944 but the strip's chief artist from 1944 to '47 was Lilly Renée and from 1947 into 1950 it was George R. Evans. In the course of this time, Planet went from a bi-monthly to a quarterly and the last few issues had catch-as-catch-can publication dates. Lyssa was always the better drawn of the main characters. Done in the pin-up style of the '40's, her costume varied from issue to issue, in the early stories, with the exception of her inevitable high heels. Finally the artists settled for an off-the-shoulder Grecian tunic and did away with the high heels to slow her to run fetching barefoot for the rest of her days.

At the hands of different artists, Hunt Bowman at times looked like a cross between Dickie Dare, Clark Kent and John Carter of Mars, or a mixture of all three. Nonetheless, Bowman managed to emerge as the figure heroic. Perhaps, it was his costume which with the exception of a few issues was consistently the same. Hunt's usual attire then, was a gladitorial skirt scarcely covering his loins and belted at the waist. Two bands of black leather accentuated a muscle-rippling chest. Wrist bands and bucaneer boots, all in black, added to his masculine appearance. Ever present was the great long bow and a quiver crammed with razor-tipped arrows. Half of Hunt's magic was dispelled in the last stories, when he dressed in short pants, a single chest band and straight topped boots. Somehow one doesn't think of a paladin in shorts saving a world, let alone the whole universe!

Companion to Hunt and Lyssa for a few issues was the great wolf dog, Lobo, who wandered with them through the remnants of civilization. Though not included in many stories, Lobo demonstrated his loyalty several times over; whether it meant ripping the throat of a hungry bear or that of a murder-bent Volta man. It was three against the universe...Hunt, Lyssa and a dog called Lobo!

Intending to keep that universe were its conquerors... the Voltamen. In fact, they were the real stars of the series. One might forget what an Earthling or a Venusian looked like...but a man from Volta, Never!



Hunt Bowman and Lyssa vs Volta Soldiers

Their evolutionary process was extraordinary. In Planet #21, they were pictured as having skins of off-color yellow, skull like-faces, and arms amazingly long in length; so much so, that Hunt Bowman, seeing them for the first time, thinks, "They must be the four-legged men who killed my tribe when I was young. Here is my chance for revenge!"

Planet #22 shows Voltonians as purple skinned and their ugly appearance heightened by wide lips, pock-marked jowls and a sickish green cast about the eyes. In Planet #24 they are called the "Kodip men from Volta." They carry electronic pistols as weapons. Their wild hair and wrinkled green bodies give them the appearance of being more plant than beast.

The two-page tale of Planet #25 depicts the Volta men more as they will be familiarly known throughout the course of the Lost World series. They are wearing spiked helmets, their skin is green and somewhat wrinkled and they wear tunics and trousers...a far cry from Planet #23 which had but a single panel showing a Volta man who didn't look very interplanetary at all, but rather more like a cauliflowered-eared boxer kept on as a janitor at Stillman's Gymn.

Issue #28 (January, 1944)...ah, Instant Recognition! Schooled in war-time stereotypes of Germans and Japanese, the reader instantly knows who and what the Volta men are. They are a mixture of Nazism, a potpurri of Yellow Peril, in short, the enemy, loathsome and hideous as are all enemies! The helmets they wear are spiked and decidely germanic, World War I vintage. (In fact in one issue a Voltan officer even wears a monocle.) The green uniforms of simple cut are reminiscent of peasant and Reich style. While the dress of the average soldier or patrol squad member is almost austere, high ranking officers were often resplendent in flowing capes, belted waistlines, throat medalions, sashes, medals and other insignia of high military merit.

Wrinkled skins and jaws sometimes dripping with salivia added to their repugnance by earth standards. Their hooded eyes were slant-like, much as the almond eyes of the Oriental. Moreover, their skin was green, not a far cry on the color spectrum from yellow. War-time readers then easily knew who the Volta men really were!

Theirs was a military civilization; one requiring complete loyalty to the state. Their ruler was a king; the military heirarchy included war lords, fleet comanders, patrol captains and an inexhaustible supply of foot soldiers providing bow-fodder for Hunt Bowman. Of course, they were completely merciless in character. They were cruel, delighting in murder and torture, excelling in these talents. Their rule was of iron; death to those who defied them!

And their science? Well as Lyssa stated, "their science ...at least for war---is superior to ours!" Rather an understatement on her part, considering Volta had conquered not only Earth but all other planets as well. A Voltan's physical prowess? Hunt once summed it up as..."and they are very hard to kill!" Another understatement that, as the bowman slew a goodly share of them issue after issue.

What really set the Volta men apart from other alien races was their manner of speaking. In the early stories, they spoke almost perfect and customary English. To quote a Volta patrol member from Issue #25, "This time we'll kill those two. They've caused our patrols enough trouble!" Issue #34 (January, 1945) has the Voltonians still in command of English syntax, as shown by these quotes of two Volta men: "Order from Captain Libdo to clear the building in five minutes! He's going to blow it up!" The answer: "Right---We'll just take a look inside here!" However, by Planet #36 (May 1945) Voltan speech is stabalized once and for all in dealogue form such as "ARGH! We the Earthlings catch at last!...Take to outside for death instantly!... Cease to talk for now you die!..."

Slower readers may have found it difficult to read. (there wer many complaints about the Volta language in "The Visigraph"---Planet's letter column instituted with Issue #44, September 1946) Nevertheless, the speech was distinctive and maintained, giving the Volta men an originality not commonly found in comic book creatures from outer space. It was a simple but effective touch. Actually it was much like Latin translated into English. The verb out of context in the sentence structure. It good was! That must you admit!

Interestingly enough, some of the last Planet Comic stories of the '50's had Volta men wearing red star insignias on their uniforms and similar emblems painted on their ships. Though not stated outright, obviously this was intended to reflect, a new encroaching menace of the day...Communism!

By and large though, the Volta symbol of domination was a serpent double-coiled about a globe. Whether the globe was symbolic of earth or intended to represent any and all planets was never made clear. At any rate, the tongue-flicking reptile emblem seemed appropriate, particularly if you were on the side of Hunt Bowman and company!

Was that a flash of shimmering green light outside the window? I've looked out, but again only white covered emptiness and an evil moon are to be seen. I must hurry to finish this manuscript. Why do I feel there is so little time? Much of the night lays ahead. If only it were not so cold and lonely outside. Or is it really lonely out there! Could it be...no, I must dismiss the thought. I shall keep on writing.

Who was the author of the Lost World series? Presumably it was "Thornecliffe Herrick" for that is the way the byline appears though often the first name is spelled without one or both "e's." It was no doubt a pseudonym...perhaps more of a pseudonym than anyone realizes.

Herrick has been identified as one "Paul Payne." Others say the writer was "Jerome Bixby", known to moviegoers for his screenplay, "Fantastic Voyage." And still others contend that Herrick was actually a number of writers who also wrote for pulp magazines published by Love Romances Publishing Company, Inc...the parent organization of the Fiction House comic book line.

Suppose though, no matter who the author, the Lost World stories were written under the influence of telesthesia! What is telesthesia? It is a susceptibility to stimuli coming from a distance and beyond the normal range of the human senses. Perposterous! you exclaim. Then what about the prophecies of Nostradamus, the predictions of Edgar Cayce, the proven glimpses into the future by Jean Dixon, the spirit messages to and from Bishop Pike. Are these to be dismissed lightly?

Assuming telesthesia is possible then might not the writer or writers of the Lost World be in contact with a mind beyond the Twentieth Century and merely be transcribing the thoughts of this entity down onto the pages of comic books. Could Lost World then actually be a warning...a mirror reflection of the future, shone down onto the past which is actually our present. And might not this account for some of the inconsistencies in Lost World's story line, until the telepathic correspondence reached its full power.

For Lost World does become more consistent. It centers itself on Earth and a natural progression of events. Lyssa's world, with its cavemen and pale people disappear from the overall picture. Bowman and Maxson the hermit are not the last men on Earth, the third planet from the sun. No, there are bands of humans to be found everywhere. They are hidden in the depths of Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. They lurk in the foul sewers of Paris. They cloistered themselves outside Annapolis, Maryland; run in fear through the ruined temples of Hollywood. They are to be found in the jungles of South America, the swamps outside Miami (now a Volta pleasure palace); in the devastated wreckage of such once proud metropolies as Boston, New York City and San Francisco, even in a monastery in India!

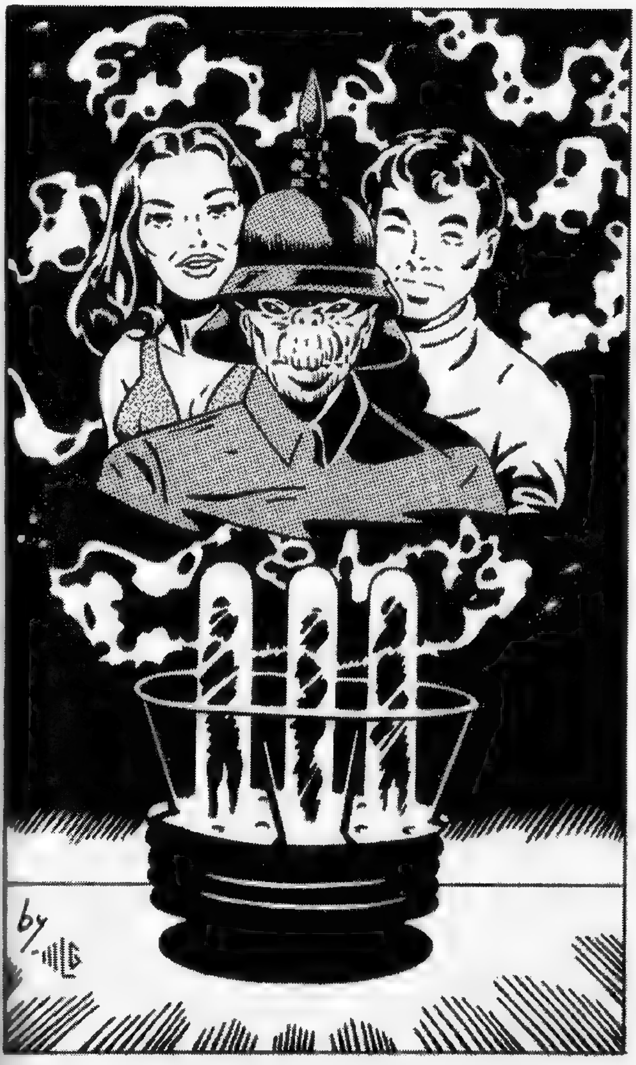
Some are primitive, some barbaric, some skilled in the ways of science and technology, some reverted to bestial forms such as the Frogmen who inhabit the flooded subway tunnels of Manhattan. Some will sell out their fellow men, others hold no allegiance to Earth or Volta, but the greatest majority want their world unshackled from the bonds of slavery...

"Gradually the slimy things of Volta learned the planet they blighted and befouled was peopled by unconquerable spirits who, like Hunt Bowman, their leader, strove doggedly to drive the Voltans out...against their tireless sabotage, their mounting destruction, the raging Voltamen sought frantically for something that would silence the primitive earthlings forever!" (Planet Comics, No. 42, May 1946)

"Three more helpless than they (Hunt and Lyssa) were the augurs of a re-awakening of the time when the world would fight back"...was the opening proclamation of The Lost World chapter in Planet #36. The three, in varying capacities would aid the bowman and his lady in stories that followed through Planet 49, the 1947 July issue.

The trio were three "children," whose father, a great scientist back in 2110, had made them the subjects of an experiment in suspended animation. However, the father had died and the three remained in suspended animation within the ruins of the "once-great Cornell Medical Center."

It was Volta men who revived them and Hunt who in turn saved them from the grinning green-skinned horrors, who leveling their ray pistols snarled: "Interesting very!



Bonnie, Bruce, and Robin

You live...You die...You live...Now we see if you die again!"

The three were brothers and sister, Bonnie, Bruce and Robin. Bruce was killed in the initial encounter, but Robin, a clever surgeon, grafted Bruce's brain into a Voltaman's body. "Bruce, you...you LIVE!" "Yes, thanks to you---Robin---But in what a terrible shape! Bonnie ---can you---can you stand the sight of me?" "You'll ALWAYS be brother Bruce to me---and you know it!" Bruce experienced agonizing moments trying to reconcile his humanity now captive in the alien form. Often he soliloquiezed that he would be better off dead, so repugnant was his fate. Yet it was his Voltan body that more than once proved instrumental in saving the lives of his companions. The body in which his brain had been grafted was that of Prince Guth, son of the Voltan king, Klarg, whom Bruce was to subsequently kill thus bringing about the edict: "ALL VOLTANS TO AVENGE THEIR RULER!"

Eventually Bruce came to regard his loathsomeness as a symbol of resistence, stating, "...this cursed body I wear will ever be a symbol of their cruelty." He, Hunt and Lyssa were to learn of the atom bomb. A dying scientist informed them: "Yes...Atomic experts prepared complete data on it...Then hid it in a time capsule in Luray caverns...I had paper with location described... Voltamen took it..."

Hunt recalled, "The Atom Bombs, I read of them when I was a child. Why their power would equal the Voltamen's unholy weapons." But the atomic secret was to remain just that, a secret to the Earth people and the Voltans alike.

Hunt, having been rescued by Bruce, buries the Voltamen in the Virginia caverns. His method...divebombing a stolen rocket ship into the cave opening and jumping clear at the last possible moment.

Another ally in Earth's battle for freedom came from another unexpected source. This was Ingor, a Volta youngster, who did not believe the doctrination of his elders "that cruelty a virtue is."

"Those earth people brave are. To like them be, one must what he thinks is right do!" Such thoughts were treason to the Voltan life style, but Ingor entertained them during stories that followed and at the risk of his own life, Ingor was often the unknown savior of Hunt and Lyssa by supplying them with means of escape.

As Voltan youngsters were being trained in the ways of their fathers, likewise, a similar move began on Earth. Planet #62 (September 1949) began with a "GENERAL PROCLAMATION," namely..."The Earth Council having met in a free and open session, has decided that for the preservation of Earth civilization and culture under Voltan tyranny, all children over ten years of age shall be registered in the School of Scientific Rehabilitation at the town known in the Twentieth Earth Epoch as Annapolis, Maryland. Signed, Hunt Bowman."

Not all parents agreed with this ruling and in a protest riot that ensued, Hunt--his fists clenched--declared, "Let go of me Lyssa. I've got to teach this crazy fool a lesson in Democracy!" Came the answer, "Hah---That's the rot all you dictators spout! If the people don't like a law, Ram It Down Their Throats Anyway!"

Hunt calmed down; the over-protective parents, after a time, changed their views and the school became an accepted thing. It's establishment gave: "The Earthmen a new battle cry---'Education For Liberation'---A Victory hymn which resounded even in the ears of the haughty tyrants---THE VOLTAMEN!" (Planet Comics, No. 64, Spring, 1950.)

Lost World devotees were puzzled when they picked up Planet #65, dated simply 1951. The story was a reprint and reprints were used from that issue on through Planet #73, when the comic ceased publication in 1954.

Why?

Was it because - if the stories were being written by a paranormal source - suddenly they were stopped by another source outside the ken of human experience. Was Lost World intended as a warning? And did someone or something want that warning stopped?

If Volta science was as superior as some of the Lost World stories indicated, might not some Voltonian... such as an adult Ingor sympathetic to the ways of mankind...be consciously or unconsciously telepathing a forewarning across a twisted veil of years and space... and suddenly be stopped!

Foolish thought is! Dogs upstairs now no bother be. Hurt my head does! Why my hands wrinkling be? Green is color of my skinn? Memories recall. There by Volta brothers planted. Metamorphic process successful was

Tiresome to longer write. No one believe, too fantastic is. Fools Earthmen are. Outside space sled awaits. I fleet commander am. Valuable brain data, I supply will.

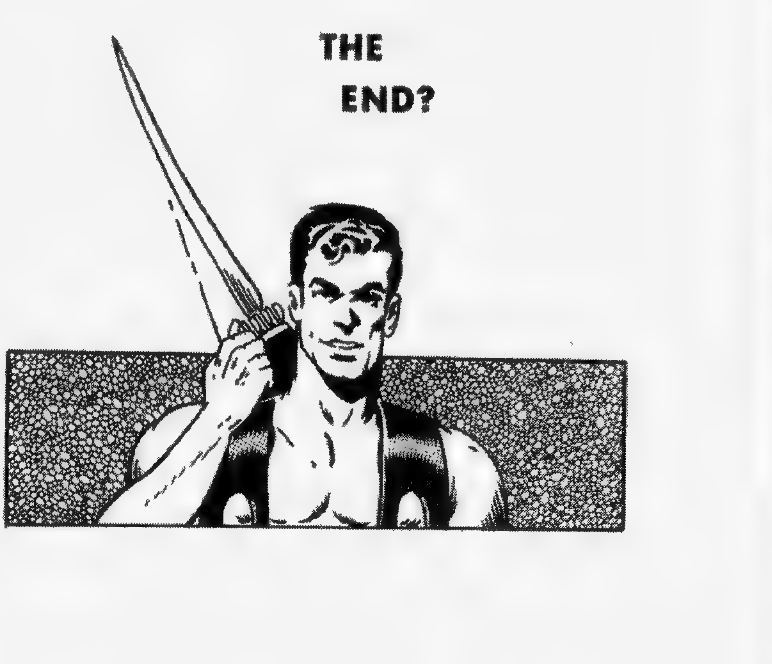
Go I now.

Not far off is hour of invasion.

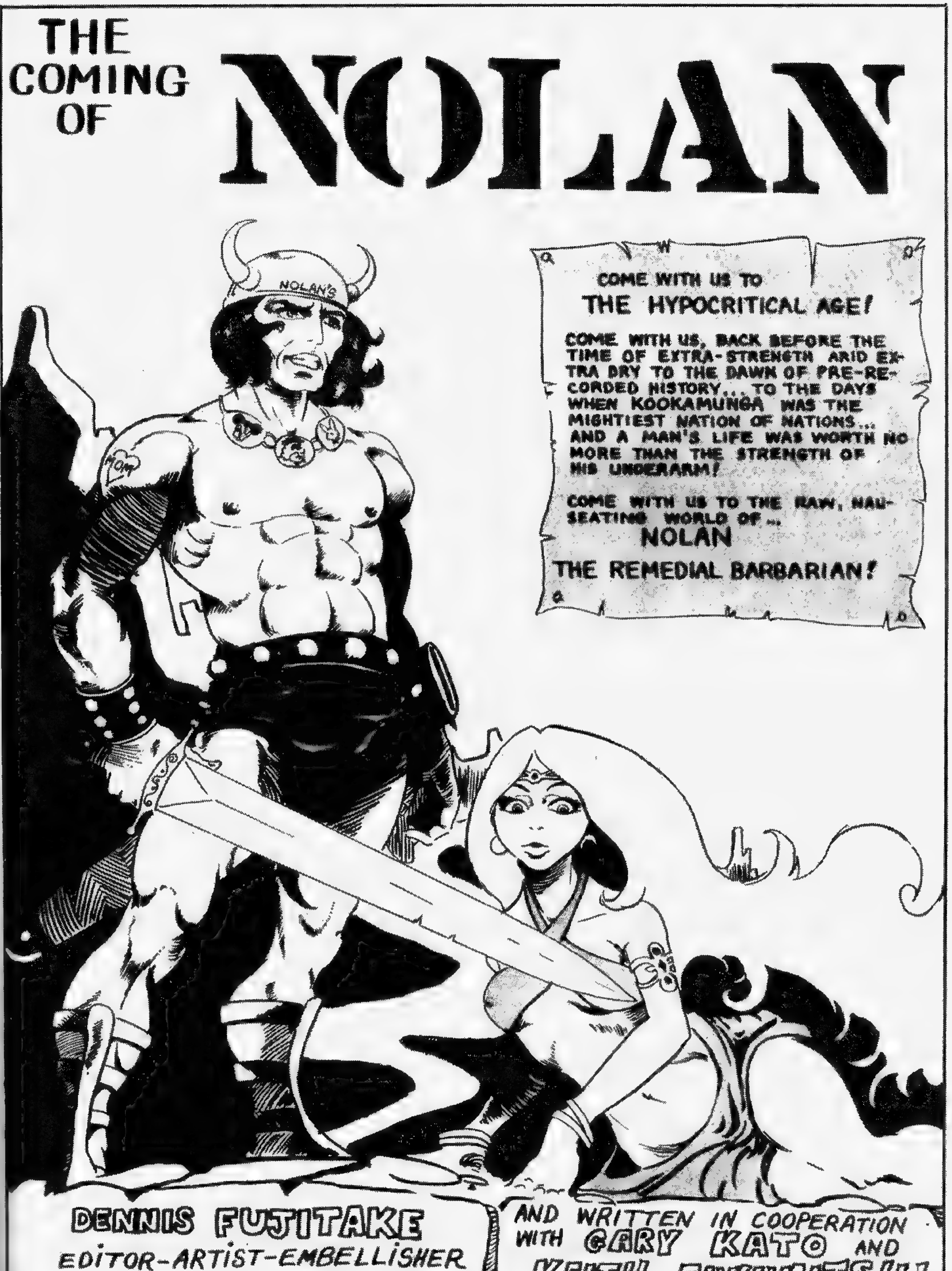
Then Supreme

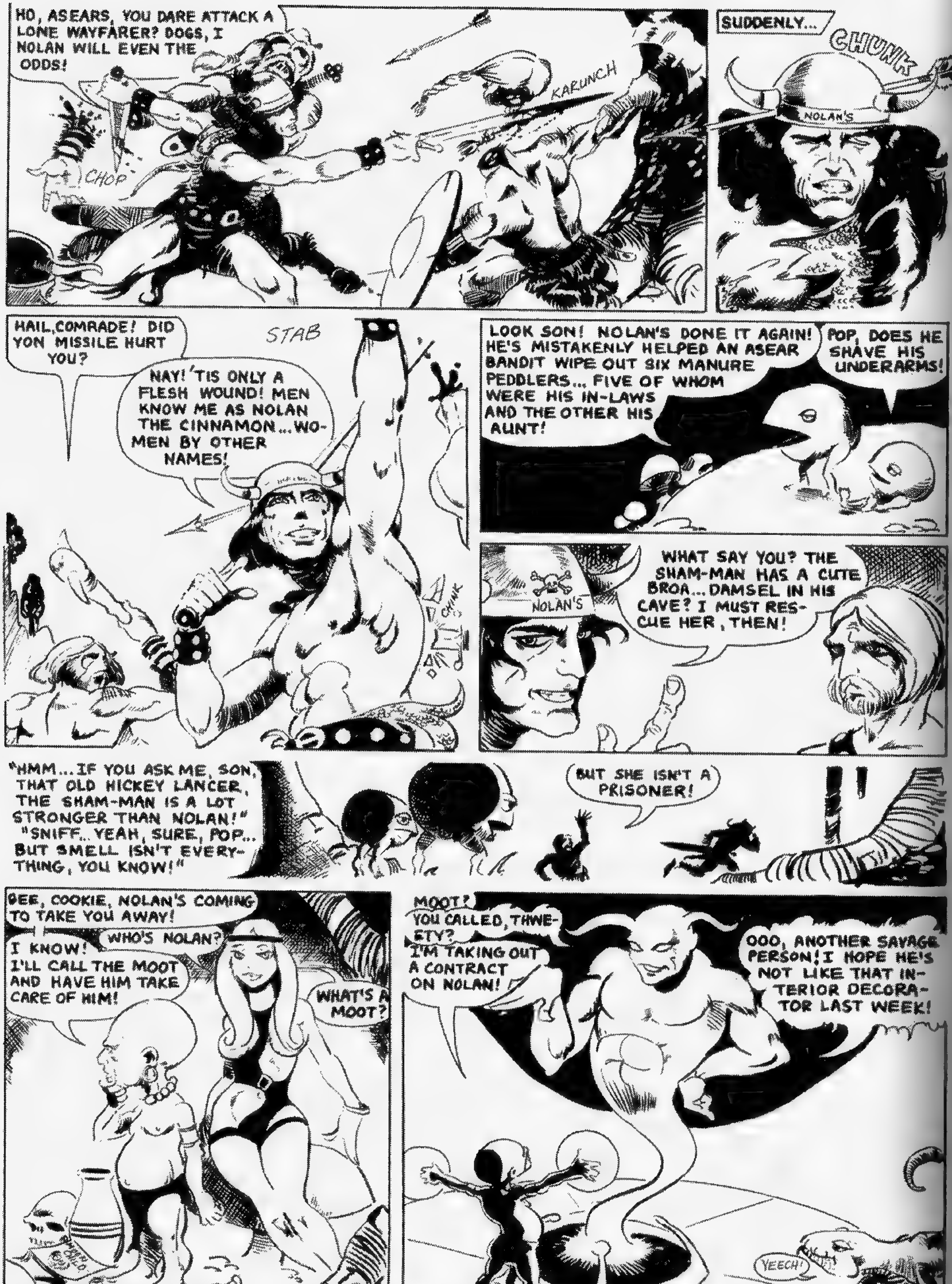
Will Volta

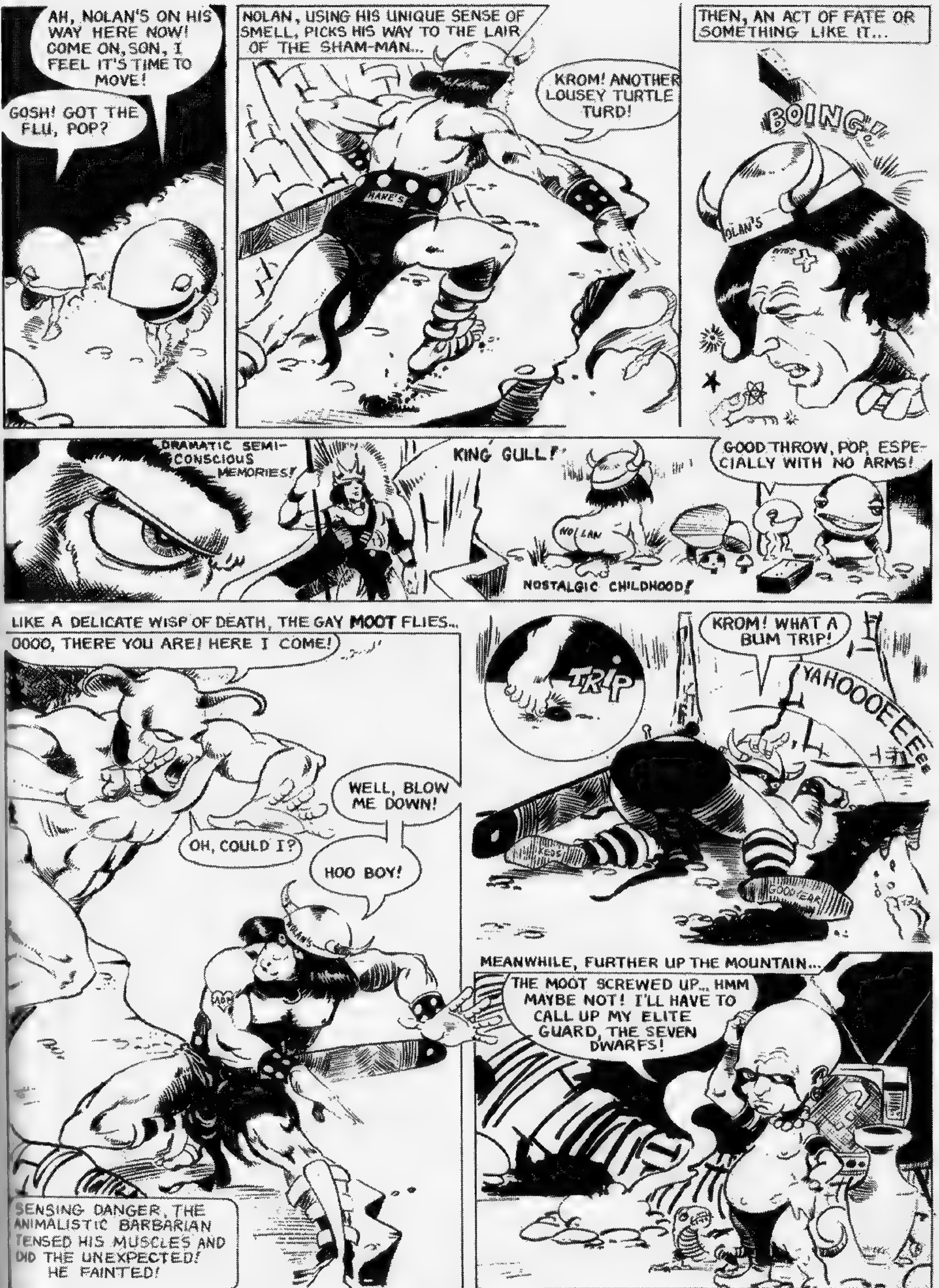
RULE......

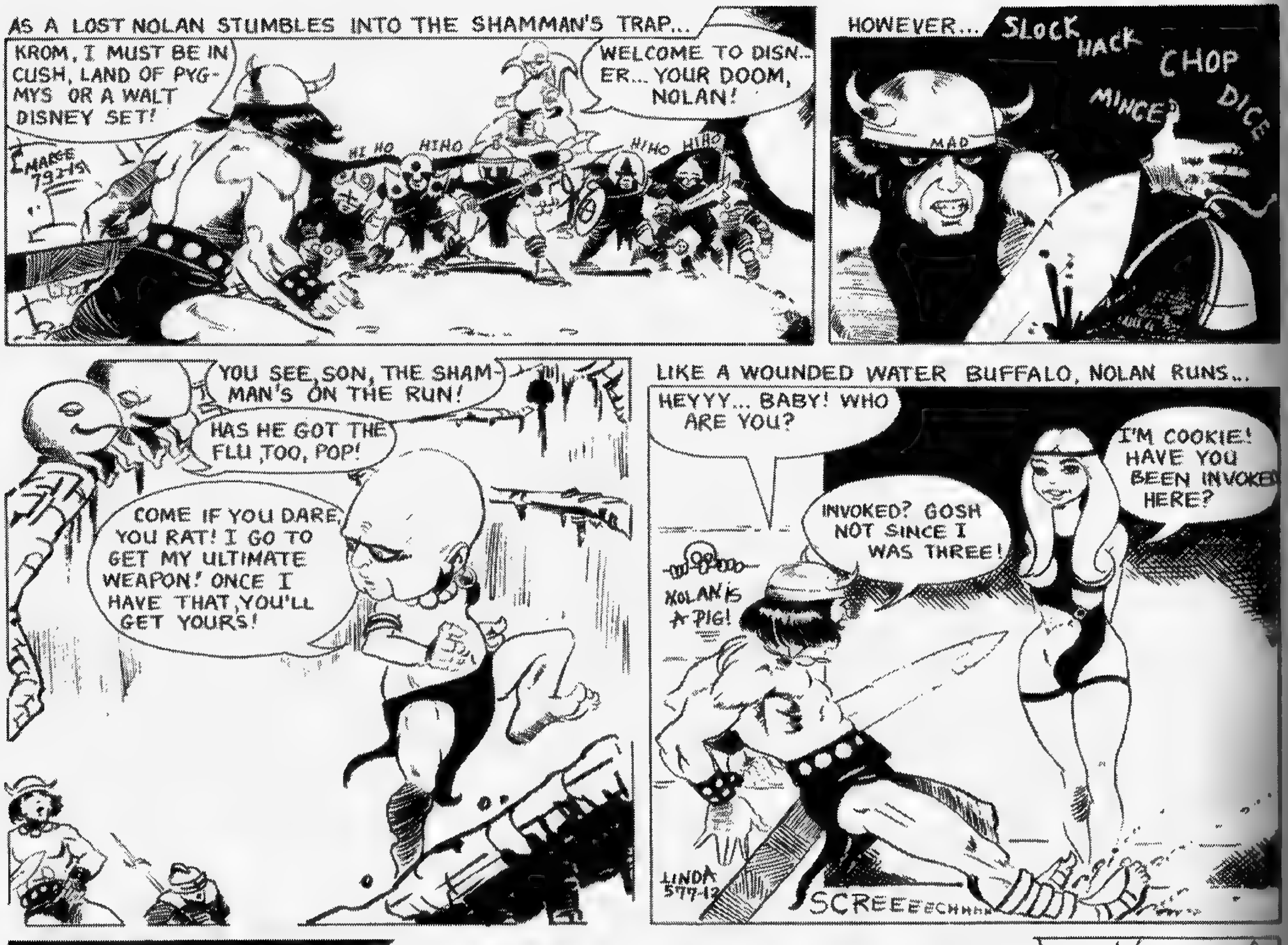


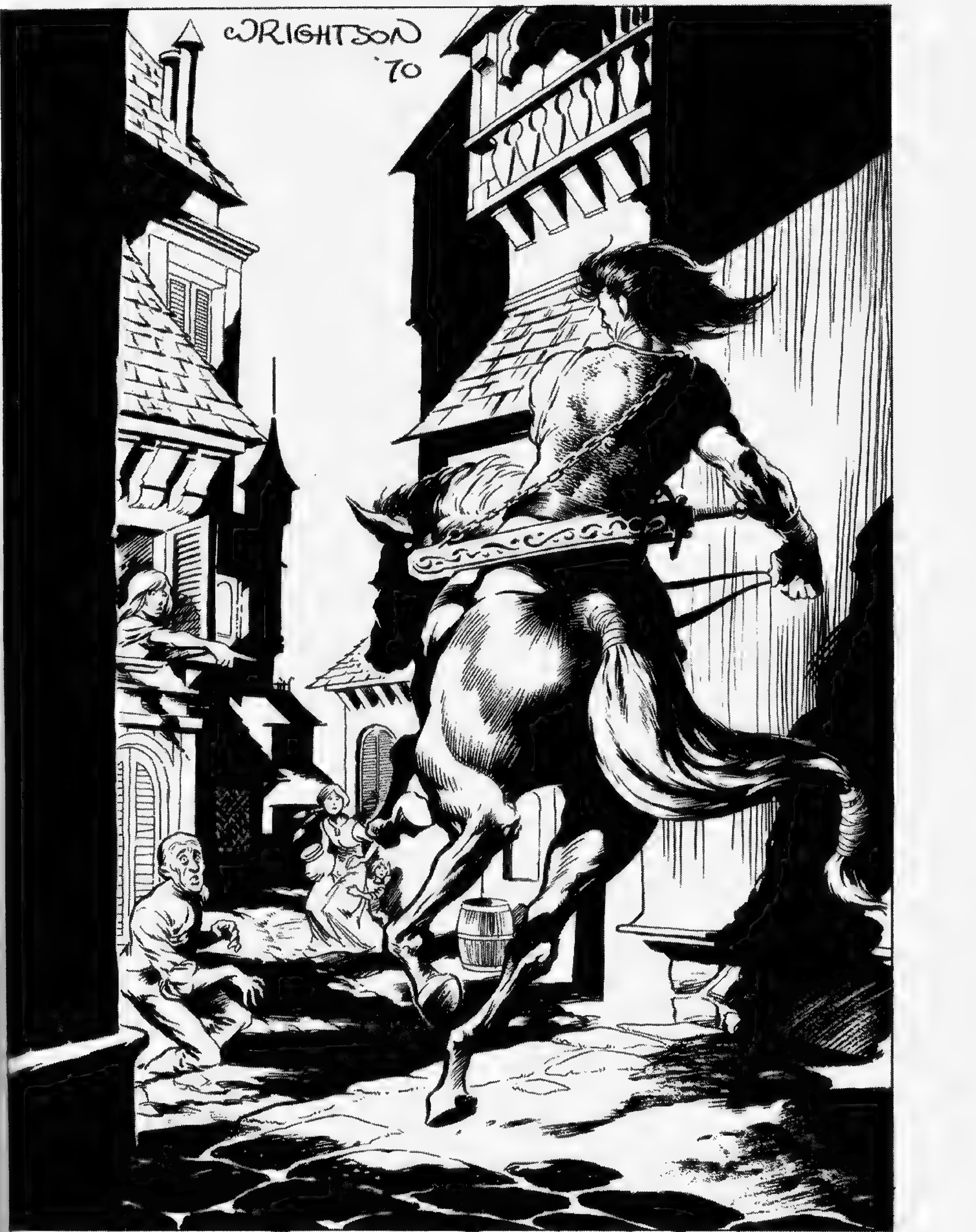
NEWTON


THE COMING OF NOLAN
NOLAN'S
MOM
COME WITH US TO THE HYPOCRITICAL AGE!
COME WITH US, BACK BEFORE THE TIME OF EXTRA-STRENGTH ARID EXTRA DRY TO THE DAWN OF PRE-RECORDED HISTORY... TO THE DAYS WHEN KOOKAMUNGA WAS THE MIGHTIEST NATION OF NATIONS... AND A MAN'S LIFE WAS WORTH NO MORE THAN THE STRENGTH OF HIS UNDERARM!
COME WITH US TO THE RAW, NAUSEATING WORLD OF... NOLAN THE REMEDIAL BARBARIAN!
DENNIS FUJITAKE EDITOR-ARTIST-EMBELLISHER LETTERER
1970 AD
AND WRITTEN IN COOPERATION WITH GARY KATO AND KEITH FUKUMITSU!


HO, ASEARS, YOU DARE ATTACK A LONE WAYFARER? DOGS, I NOLAN WILL EVEN THE ODDS!
CHOP
KARUNCH
SUDDENLY...
CHUNK
NOLAN'S
HAIL, COMRADE! DID YON MISSILE HURT YOU?
STAB
NAY! 'TIS ONLY A FLESH WOUND! MEN KNOW ME AS NOLAN THE CINNAMON... WOMEN BY OTHER NAMES!
CHUNK
LOOK SON! NOLAN'S DONE IT AGAIN! HE'S MISTAKENLY HELPED AN ASEAR BANDIT WIPE OUT SIX MANURE PEDDLERS... FIVE OF WHOM WERE HIS IN-LAWS AND THE OTHER HIS AUNT!
POP, DOES HE SHAVE HIS UNDERARMS!
NOLAN'S
WHAT SAY YOU? THE SHAM-MAN HAS A CUTE BROA... DAMSEL IN HIS CAVE? I MUST RESCUE HER, THEN!
"HMM... IF YOU ASK ME, SON, THAT OLD HICKEY LANCER, THE SHAM-MAN IS A LOT STRONGER THAN NOLAN!" "SNIFF.. YEAH, SURE, POP... BUT SMELL ISN'T EVERYTHING, YOU KNOW!"
BUT SHE ISN'T A PRISONER!
GEE, COOKIE, NOLAN'S COMING TO TAKE YOU AWAY!
WHO'S NOLAN?
I KNOW! I'LL CALL THE MOOT AND HAVE HIM TAKE CARE OF HIM!
WHAT'S A MOOT?
DR. STRANGE
MOOT? YOU CALLED, THWEETY?
I'M TAKING OUT A CONTRACT ON NOLAN!
OOO, ANOTHER SAVAGE PERSON! I HOPE HE'S NOT LIKE THAT INTERIOR DECORATOR LAST WEEK!
YEECH!


AH, NOLAN'S ON HIS WAY HERE NOW! COME ON, SON, I FEEL IT'S TIME TO MOVE!
GOSH! GOT THE FLU, POP?
NOLAN, USING HIS UNIQUE SENSE OF SMELL, PICKS HIS WAY TO THE LAIR OF THE SHAM-MAN..
MANE'S
KROM! ANOTHER LOUSEY TURTLE TURD!
THEN, AN ACT OF FATE OR SOMETHING LIKE IT...
BOING!!
NOLAN'S
KISS
DRAMATIC SEMI-CONSCIOUS MEMORIES!
KING GULL!
NOLAN
NOSTALGIC CHILDHOOD!
GOOD THROW, POP, ESPECIALLY WITH NO ARMS!
LIKE A DELICATE WISP OF DEATH, THE GAY MOOT FLIES..
OOOO, THERE YOU ARE! HERE I COME!
WELL, BLOW ME DOWN!
OH, COULD I?
HOO BOY!
NOLAN'S
SENSING DANGER, THE ANIMALISTIC BARBARIAN TENSED HIS MUSCLES AND DID THE UNEXPECTED! HE FAINTED!
TRIP
KROM! WHAT A BUM TRIP!
YAHOOOEEEEe
KEDS
GOODYEAR
MEANWHILE, FURTHER UP THE MOUNTAIN...
THE MOOT SCREWED UP... HMM MAYBE NOT! I'LL HAVE TO CALL UP MY ELITE GUARD, THE SEVEN DWARFS!


AS A LOST NOLAN STUMBLES INTO THE SHAMMAN'S TRAP...
KROM, I MUST BE IN CUSH, LAND OF PYGMYS OR A WALT DISNEY SET!
WELCOME TO DISN... ER... YOUR DOOM, NOLAN!
HI HO HIHO HIHO HIHO
MARGE 793-191
HOWEVER...
SLOCK HACK CHOP MINCE DICE
MAD
YOU SEE, SON, THE SHAMMAN'S ON THE RUN!
HAS HE GOT THE FLU, TOO, POP!
COME IF YOU DARE, YOU RAT! I GO TO GET MY ULTIMATE WEAPON! ONCE I HAVE THAT, YOU'LL GET YOURS!
LIKE A WOUNDED WATER BUFFALO, NOLAN RUNS...
HEYYY... BABY! WHO ARE YOU?
I'M COOKIE! HAVE YOU BEEN INVOKE HERE?
INVOKED? GOSH NOT SINCE I WAS THREE!
NOLAN IS A PIG!
LINDA 577-12
SCREEEECHHHH
OH MY, YOU'RE SO CUTE! COME WITH ME TO MY BOUDOIR!
HMM! WHY DON'T WE GO TO YOUR BEDROOM, INSTEAD!
NOLAN'S
SEXY
NOLAN 753-491
HA HA! I'VE DODGED FIRESTICKS BEFORE! THEY THUNDER ONLY ONCE!
WHAT'RE THEY DOING NOW, POP?
SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH INTERCOURSE, POP?
YOU'RE A LITTLE YOUNG YET, BOY!
HO! I KNEW THAT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE YOU WANTED WAS TOO DARING! AH.. THE SHAM-MAN'S BACK!
FUJITAKE NOV. '70
HA HA HA! YOU'LL LIKE THIS ONE! IT'S A REPEATING MACHINE FIRE STICK! HEE, HEE!
BUDDA BUDA VIP VIP VIP
THIS IS THE EN
OF NOLAN'


WRIGHTSON
'70

CONAN

by TONY ISABELLA

Marvel's *Conan the Barbarian* is a success. That much is seen by the sales figures. But sales figures hardly ever show why something is a success. That's for editors and fans to decide.

That's why I think *Conan* is a success...because Roy Thomas is both editor and fan. He and Barry Smith approach the book as more than a check. It's, in many ways, a fan project. The highly professional treatment enables this fan project to outshine all other comics on the stands.

Few fans seem to realize the immensity of the research Thomas has to do for every issue of *Conan* he writes. He's had to go over nearly every piece of fantasy fiction Robert E. Howard ever penned and assimilate all the facts upon which Howard's past world rests. In effect, Roy has to completely master a second world.

I didn't realize how much this actually entailed until Roy of the Big Heart gave me an opportunity to write a summery for *Conan*. Then I realized. Brother, did I realize!

Before I could even think of a plot, I had to reread a number of the Conan books. Luckily, Roy suggested I do a story within an early time of Conan's life or I would have had to reread the whole series as Roy himself had to do. This time I couldn't read merely for enjoyment. I had to catch all the little clues that Roy makes use of in writing his original Conan stories. Notes were made and discarded throughout several long nights.

After rereading the first three books in the series, I decided to set my story between "Rouges in the House" by Howard himself and "The Hand of Nergal" by Howard & Lin Carter. Both are in Lancer's *Conan*.

The former tale ends with Conan setting out on the well-known Road of Kings. He will soon be a mercenary in the Turanean armies of King Yildiz. He has not yet honored his dead companion Nestor, called Burgin in the comics for copyright reasons, in the way known to men through all times...getting smashed!

So we join a young, slightly intoxicated Conan in a bar along the Road of Kings.

A line about the riders of Hyrkania, riders who wore silk and silver and gold, from an introduction to one of the earliest Conan stories, suggested an awesome splash panel. Before long, my story grew from that splash panel (described in the first paragraph of a synopsis which follows this piece).

At this writing, I do not know if Roy is buying my plot. I'm printing it here for historical oddity purposes. Even if Roy does buy this synopsis, the story that appears will probably differ.

Even if Roy doesn't buy the synopsis, the writing of it allowed me to rediscover Conan. Payment in full!

(But don't tell Roy I said that!)

CONAN THE BARBARIAN in

"The Rider of the Purple Sage"
by Tony Isabella

A flash of mortal lightning crosses the Hyborean plains, some hell-bound warrior off to meet his destiny. Dressed in the silver and silk and gold of far Hyrkania, the rider pushes his whimpering mount beyond its endurance. Yet it continues. The rider seems to be unfeeling, as if he had no soul. And, indeed, he does not!

What is friendship in the barbaric era between the sinking of fabled Atlantis and the dawning of recorded history? The man that wields a strong sword and does not run it through you when the act would benefit him is indeed a friend. And also a fool.

But even a fool deserves proper honors on his death. And the Cimmerian youth Conan has paused in his travels along the Hyborean highways to pay his late Gunderman companion his due respects. In the inn of Balak along the Road of Kings, Conan quaffs his ale and feasts on roasted pig, giving proper respect to Nestor even as his memory floats away.

Conan's gluttony angers a Kothian thief who, no doubt, covets the barbarian's rich purse, the gift of a grateful Corinthian aristocrat. Though unsure whether he fights one foe or many--Conan is not quite used to strong Hyborean brew--the young barbarian thinks he must teach these civilized dogs proper respect for the dead and for fine Brythunian steel.

Conan rises from his table and stares through the clouded ale he has been drinking. His foe and all the other customers of this inn, as well as the inhabitants, are unmoving as statues. A curse escapes from Conan's lips as a devilishly cold breeze barely lands on his broad shoulders. He turns...

A man stands before Conan. He is elderly, but the man's form leaves no doubts as to the power of those old limbs. He is garbed in the finest silk, embroidered with ancient symbols. The man has but to glance at Conan's arm and Conan finds himself lowering that fine sword of his.

The newcomer is a wizard from far off Khitai. That Conan can grasp through his intoxicated stupor. He wishes to hire the young Cimmerian for a single mission and he offers a bag of gold besides which Conan's own pales into nothingness. Conan, confused by that fine beverage of Balak's and tempted by the wealth that the wizard offers, forgets his natural aversion to sorcers and accepts. As he does so, he is struck by strange images. The wizard's voice is forming these images into a tale of sorcery and of doom!

The wizards story:

In far-off Khitai, two powerful wizards live. Unlike wizards elsewhere, they do not battle for each other's lands. The wizards, Philcon and Marcon, are father and son. They are content to exist in this world without exercising their great powers except to provide for themselves and occasionally to aid a mortal toward a well-deserved prize or an equally deserved doom. They have existed for longer than either of them can remember.

But Philcon feels the weight of the ages creeping up on a mortal frame that should have broken centuries ago. He does not fear death, but can not bear for life to go on without him. Perhaps he has been driven mad by the weight that crushes him, but he has put into operation a plan to doom the world in the near future.

Philcon has exacted a frightning payment for past favors from a young Hyrkanian nobel. He has intertwined their souls and given the young man a fearsome mission. Placed on a beast that will not stop galloping until the mission is completed, the young Hyrkanian sets off for the Western Sea. When he reaches that world-spanning body of water, he will pour a mystic potion into it.

The vile potion will immediately begin its grim work. It can poison the tiniest forms of life in the sea almost immediately and these will in turn poison the larger forms of life, including Man! The floating dead will poison the actual waters. The dead waters will poison the land where ever it touches it. And, in turn, these poisoned lands shall cover the entire earth. Within a mere matter of a hundred years, the earth will be dead.

The wizard's story concludes with a final image of the purple sunset over the Hyborean plains and the grim rider who speeds ever closer to the Western Sea.

Conan, a simple man, can not understand this talk of destruction coming from an ocean he has never seen. He can not quite get the notion of men living hundreds of years into his skull. But he can understand the gold that the wizard offers him. For such gold, he could kill a thousand men. The wizard asks that he but stop an individual man. Conan agrees.

The inn fades from view. Conan finds himself on his own animal, another gift from the grateful Murilo, with a bag of wealth tied around his belt. He notices, somewhat incredulously, that he is traveling the same plain that the rider was crossing in the visions Marcon showed him. And, lifting his eyes, he sees the rider about a thousand yards ahead of him.

The race. Conan's mount travels faster than the Cimmerian is willing to accept as possible. Conan notes in passing that he can no longer feel the effects of the alcohol, but dismisses it almost immediately to concentrate on the problem at hand. Any wizard can cure a hangover if he's worth his salt. The problem at hand seems much more serious. Conan is hard pressed to catch up with the rider of Philcon.

Spotting a fork in the road and remembering that it will gain him precious time when it again intersects the plain, Conan pushes his mount down it. When he emerges, he is racing neck and neck to the rider of Philcon. There is no way for Conan to halt the other horse. Taking a moment to guage the distance, Conan leaps off his horse, taking the young Hyrkanian to the ground with him. The rider and Conan both jump to their feet almost emmediately, hands on their sword hilts.

The young Hyrkanian looks at Conan, puzzled. Then, as powerful Philcon correctly assess the situation, the young nobel grasps his sword to kill the barbarian. The sword of Conan is also quick to enter the fray. The Cimmerian does not want to kill this young man, but the battle has come down to a basic point--one of them is to die if the other is to live. Conan, his mind his own, quickly gains the advantage and deals the Hyrkanian a mortal blow.

The Hyrkanian lies slumped against a tree and whispers a single name, "Noree," into the wind before life departs.

In Khitai, Philcon lies dead, his body rapidly decaying.

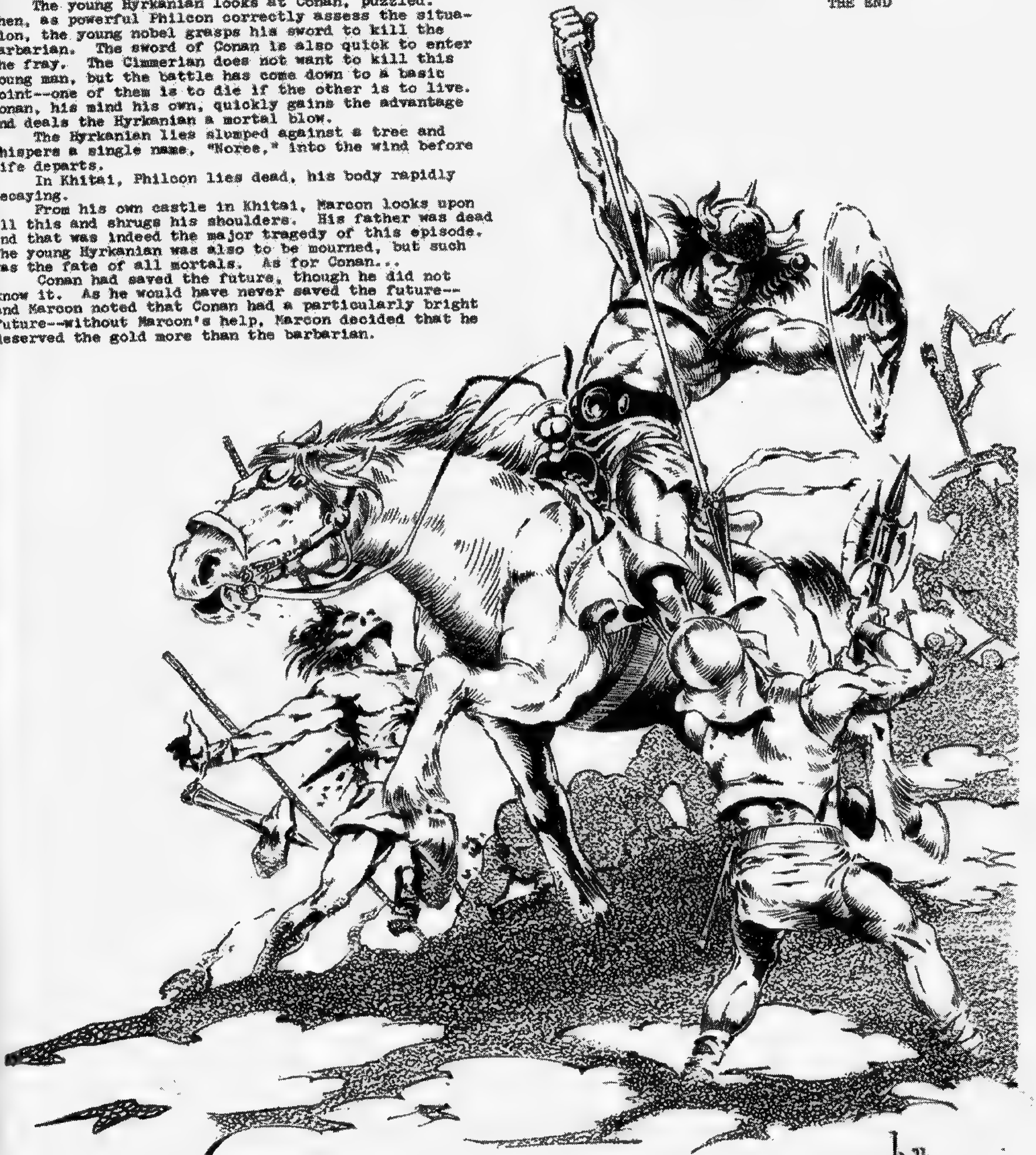
From his own castle in Khitai, Marcon looks upon all this and shrugs his shoulders. His father was dead and that was indeed the major tragedy of this episode. The young Hyrkanian was also to be mourned, but such was the fate of all mortals. As for Conan...

Conan had saved the future, though he did not know it. As he would have never saved the future--and Marcon noted that Conan had a particularly bright future--without Marcon's help, Marcon decided that he deserved the gold more than the barbarian.

Surveying the scene, Conan grunted and felt for the wealth he had tied about his waist. It was gone. He cursed. He should have known better than to trust a wizard. The Cimmerian decided to rummage through his foe's possessions for something saleable. All he found was a small vial of some liquid. He sniffed at the vial and found it noxious stuff indeed. Cursing again, he hurled it at the tree. And his heart froze.

For the minute the liquid had touched the tree, it had withered and decayed.

THE END



Keith Fukumitsu

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A HAPPY ACCIDENT

by

Bob Cosgrove

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A happy accident--that's the best way to describe the phenomenal success of TARZAN, the ape-man, creation of Edgar Rice Burroughs. When analyzing Burroughs' secrets to success, the Saturday Evening Post (July 29, 1939 issue) concluded that aspiring writers should follow nine simple short-cuts to literary fame: 1. Be a disappointed man. 2. Achieve no success at anything you touch. 3. Lead an unbearably drab and uninteresting life. 4. Hate civilization. 5. Learn no grammar. 6. Read little. 7. Write nothing. 8. Have an ordinary mind and commonplace tastes, approximating those of the great reading public. 9. Avoid subjects that you know about.

Actually, Burroughs' life was not entirely drab and uninteresting, but the Post did have a point, and they were generally on target with their other nine items. Born in Chicago, Illinois on Sept. 1, 1875, the son of a Civil War Major, Burroughs enjoyed an affluent adolescence, attending various private schools. Young Edgar's prep school allowance was a very-comfortable $150 a month, but later, when his family lost their money, Burroughs was never able to earn as much as he was previously given. A total flop as a businessman, Burroughs twice had to pawn family heirlooms in order to buy food for his wife, the former Emma Cantennia Hulbert, and his children. A failure as a salesman himself, Burroughs worked up a "get-rich-quick-scheme," whereby he would write a course in salesmanship and then send his mail-order pupils out to peddle aluminum pots and pans. This proved disasterous, but Burroughs was a bigger success as a business advice columnist, where he carefully avoided giving any real advice at all, prefering to use high-blown phrases and mumbo-jumbo rather than present anything so concrete that some misguided businessman, thinking that he was acting on the advice of a Captain of Industry, actually might take a step that would plunge him into bankruptcy.

Burroughs' big break, however, came when he was made head of the stenographic department of the Chicago Sears-Roebuck branch.

His first contact with the literary world was a reluctant one. His work with the Alcola firm required him to place advertisments in pulp magazines, which he bought purely for the purpose of making sure that the ads were printed. He despised fiction, but after glancing at a few of the pulp stories, decided that even he could be a writer. He therefore wrote a novel, which Thomas Newell Metcalf, editor of the All-Story Magazine accepted, sending Burroughs a check for $4oo. The story saw print in 1912, under the title of "Under the Moon of Mars."

Burroughs' big success, however, was Tarzan of the Apes, a tale he wrote longhand, and finally sold to All-Story Magazine for the sum of $700. Two years later, A.C. McClurb published the story in book form and it sold over a million copies. Five years later, in 1919, Burroughs was a millionare, comfortably settled on a large, Southern Californian ranch named, appropriately, Tarzana. Already, the first Tarzan movie, like the many that were to follow a prostitution of Burroughs' original concept, had proved a smashing success.

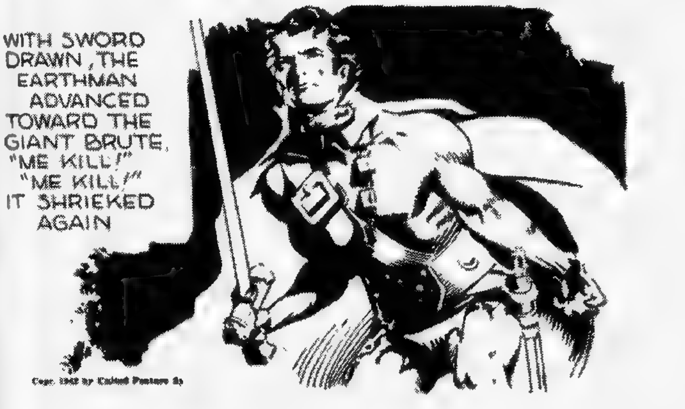
The essential question remains, how did Burroughs, a confirmed anti-intellectual who read little, understand grammar only instinctively, detested Shakespear and Dickens, and didn't have the slightest idea of what the hell he was writing about, manage to create a character that captured the imagination of millions of people, both simple and sophisticated, a character who made his creater a very rich man indeed? Certainly it wasn't a desire for literary immortality--Burroughs viewed writing as a craft, not an art, and churned out his little tales with an eye on his bank account, not his muse. To do this, he drew on tales he had created to amuse himself while lying awake in bed at night; a Walter Mitty-like response to his drab life. One can only conclude that the dour-looking Burroughs was a storytelling genius.

Part of Tarzan's appeal lies in his powerful conception, which combines several historical concepts, although Burroughs knowledge of them was almost certainly intuitive. One is the idea of the "noble savage," the man uncorrupted by the evils of civilization, popularized after Captain Cook's discovery of the South Sea Islands, and tales of the Tahitian natives which filtered back to England. Burroughs made good use of this concept--many times in Tarzan. The words "civilized" and "uncivilized" took on ironic meanings.

Another timeless concept is that of the hero-infant, abandoned to the wilderness, who is saved by peasants or wild animals, who raise him as their own. Tarzan was adopted by the great apes, and was indeed half-grown before he fully comprehended that he was not an ape at all, but a human being. Burroughs was told that Rudyard Kipling was a Tarzan fan, and had assumed that Tarzan was patterned after the Mowgli of Kipling's "Jungle Book". However, Burroughs himself maintained that Tarzan was a literary descendent of Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome, who were themselves suckled by a she-wolf. Tarzan does have much in common with Mowgli, however, who might himself have been a modern reworking of the Romulus and Remus myth.

Part of Tarzan's appeal, like Mowgli's, may have been imperialistic. Although Tarzan devotees have refuted charges that their hero was racist by citing passages from ERB's own writings, some of Tarzan's undoubtedly enjoyed vicariously the noble, all-powerful white man amongst the natives, even though such was not, from the best information historians can gather, ERB's intention. At best, Tarzan's setting was not condescending, but rather, exotic, a fictional Africa bearing only slightly more resemblance to the historical one than Burroughs' Mars did to the actual Red Planet.

Though denied the benefit of a formal education, Tarzan was no dummy--contrary to the persistent distortions of most of the Tarzan films, Burroughs' savage not only spoke fluent, self-taught English, but a vast number of other languages as well, including Ape language, the language of various Burroughs created civilizations, JOHN CARTER of MARS, from the 1941 syndicated Sunday newspaper strip by John Coleman Burroughs. JCB was the youngest of the three Burroughs' children. He graduated with honors from Pamona, where he majored in art. Burroughs illustrated the strip for well over a year, until his commitments toward the war effort forced his abandoning it.


WITH SWORD DRAWN, THE EARTHMAN ADVANCED TOWARD THE GIANT BRUTE. "ME KILL!" "ME KILL!" IT SHRIEKED AGAIN
Copr. 1942 by United Feature Sy

and numerous African dialects.

Although Burroughs could narrate a superb adventure tale, his star character "carried" many weak ones. Those who reworked the Tarzan myth in other media, however, commited travesties undreamed of by ERB at his horrible, painful worst; travesties which included tampering with the Tarzan-concept, something which Burroughs himself steadfastly refused to do. Somehow, even the poorest treatments of the ape-man proved popular, evidence of the simple power of the original concept, which evidently glowed and sparkled through the tripe that was Tarzan the big business.

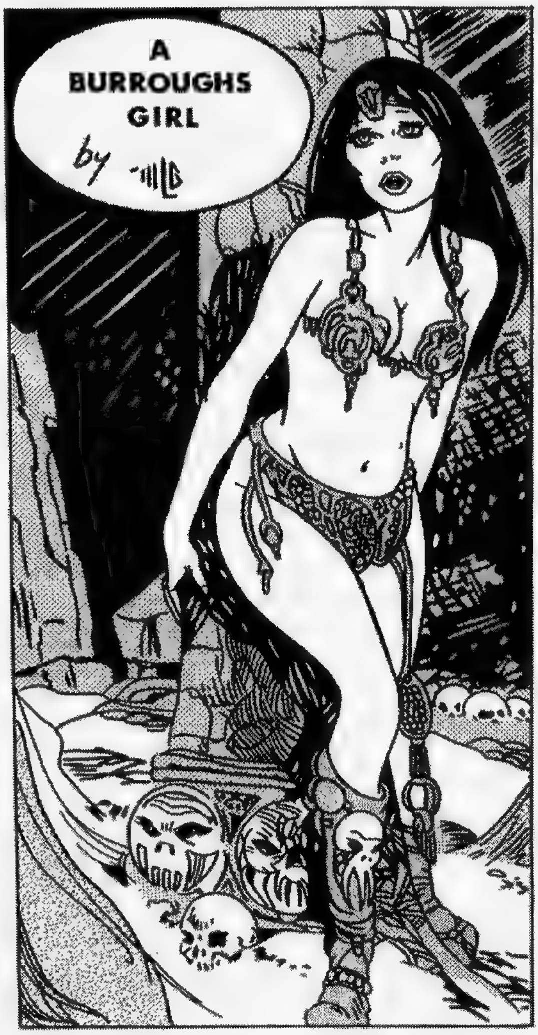
Bad versions of Tarzan occured in virtually every medium the character appeared in--and he appeared in almost every medium. However, perhaps he fared best at the hands of those much-maligned people, the creators of the comic strip. This should not be surprising to any who have any real understanding of the medium, and of the creative people who once--and in a few cases, still do--work in the comics industry.

Possibly the greatest of living comic-strip artists, Hal Foster, brought Tarzan to the daily newspaper, and shortly thereafter, took over the Sunday strip first drawn by his replacement on the dailys, Rex Maxon. The strength of Foster's conception was its freshness of approach, largely uninfluenced by the great ERB book illustrator, J. Allen St. John. Foster drew upon the standards of illustration, portraying Tarzan as a stately, Grecian figure, who ruled a jungle made rich by Foster's talent for setting. Employing mainly long-shots that emphasized the jungle lord's physical appeal, Foster carefully crafted the strip to a peak of unqualified success, before leaving to begin his magnum opus, Prince Valiant.

Replacing the great Hal Foster might have seemed impossible, but Burne Hogarth, the illustrator who replaced him, soon created a more dynamic Tarzan than Foster's. Hogarth brought to the strip an understanding of art history and of anatomy unrivalled in comics. He was perhaps the most technically skilled artist ever to work in the medium. He possessed very clear, uncompromising theories of art, theories which his artwork itself reflected. His powerful Tarzan, standing almost 9 heads tall, presided over a lush jungle that was dark with hidden menace. Each native, each white man, each animal, even the very grass, was a sinister threat, a challenge only Tarzan was equal to. Foster brought to bear on Tarzan his supreme sense of pacing--scenes of violence and action offset by those of tranquility--many of his characters were highly naturalistic. If Hogarth had any sense of pacing, he never revealed it --his world was, evil, and only evil, save for Tarzan and an occasional grudging innocent victim for the jungle lord to save. Tarzan's fists were never limp--only tense, clenched. His body never stood relaxed, but was at worst, poised for action, at best contorting itself into impossible positions, savagely knifing a lion so threatening and muscular it made a Foster lion look like a pussycat. This was Hogarth's glory. He was never naturalistic, but was always Michelangelo, at his most baroque--indeed Tarzan by Hogarth is undoubtedly the most baroque comic strip ever to appear. In his strips, Hogarth created a unity of panel movement akin to Michelangelo's Last Judgement. It is perhaps a good thing that Hogarth never worked as a comic book artist, for reading a single one of his Sunday pages is a mentally exhausting experience. Hogarth's Tarzan in a monthly comic book would have been too much like The Last Judgement on a living room wall--too overpowering, out of place. Most Tarzan fans agree that Hogarth is his greatest artist, and Hogarth's contributions to the comic strip are readily acknowledged by comic fans, especially the French, who in spite of their sometimes peculiar views of the comic medium, have indeed found a valid hero in Hogarth.

None of the Tarzan artists to follow Hogarth have been a serious challenge to his claim as the definitive depictor of the Ape-man; however, Tarzan's latest newspaper illustrator, Russ Manning, obviously influenced by Hogarth, may eventually surpass him. Manning fuses Hogarth's dynamism with a purity and cleanness of line that conveys a totally opposite, static effect. In addition, Manning's narrative approach marks a return to the pacing of Foster, combined with a Hogarth influence. Whether this successful synthesis of the Hogarth and Foster approach, combined with Manning's own creative talents, will prove to be the Tarzan approach is difficult to say. Certainly Manning will face stiff competition from comic book genius Joe Kubert, who is now drawing Tarzan in a new, DC version. Joe has combined the Foster image, with his own powerful style to create a dynamic, rugged new Tarzan conception. It is some of the finest Kubert work seen in years!

Burroughs said that his ordinariness explained his success as a writer. When he wrote his first novel for All-Story, he used the nom de plume of Normal Bean, meaning common head. By accident the editor changed it to Norman Bean. Burroughs was unwilling to use his own name at the time because he thought it would hurt his standing in the unsuccessful business world. He believed that his novels were in demand because he wrote about things that interested him and felt they were bound to interest the ordinary people.

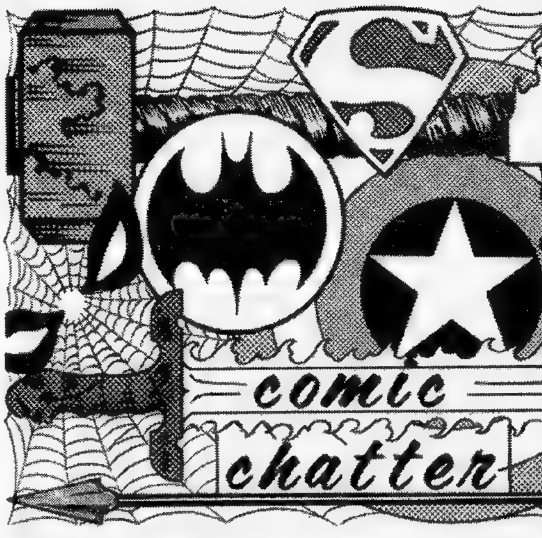


Another source of Burroughs' strength was his strong grip of character. Not only Tarzan, but the apes and animals are highly individualized beings who seldom step out of character. Burroughs edited the early Tarzan movies and newspaper strips to see that no liberties were taken with the Tarzan psychology. In one movie scene, for example, Tarzan threw his head back and laughed long and boisterously. "Strike it out," ordered Burroughs. Tarzan, in spite of his violent activity, is as reserved and contemplative as Hamlet. Nothing could be farther from his personality than brainless uproariousness.

M-G-M spared no expense on the famous Tarzan yell. Miles of sound track of human, animal and instruments sounds were tested in collecting the ingredients of an unearthly howl. The cry of a mother camel robbed of her young was used until more mournful sounds were found. A combination of five different sounds made up the final Tarzan yell. 1. Sound track of Johnny Weissmuller yelling, amplified. 2. Track of hyena howl, run backward and volume diminished. 3. Soprano note sung by Lorraine Bridges, recorded at reduced speed; then re-recorded at varying speeds to give a "flutter" in sound. 4. Growl of a dog, recorded very faintly. 5. Raspy note of a violin G-string, recorded very faintly. After constant practice Weissmuller was able to let loose an almost perfect imitation of the sound track.

In 1950, Edgar Rice Burroughs died. He left behind him a heritage in the stories and worlds he created. A heritage that millions have enjoyed over the years. Characters like Tarzan, John Carter of Mars, Korak, Carson of Venus and his many other world-famous adventure characters, have given Burroughs an immortality all his own.

MIKE ROBERTS



INTRODUCTION

Old time readers of Comic Crusader will recognize this column from early issues. For you new readers, this is a place where your editor imparts news of upcoming events in Comic Crusader and bits of info about comics old and new.

ITEM

I really hesitate to go into this, but rather than have rumors run through fandom, I best give you the straight dope. I am slowly going blind. This is why I've said NO to any requests for art, these last few months. I've undergone two laser beam eye operations at the Mass. Eye and Ear Hospital, trying to save as much sight as possible. Results aren't final yet, but I believe, after the operations are all over, that I'll have enough sight to still draw. The art you'll be seeing, in future issues of Comic Crusader, was art I did in advance of the first operation. I plan on publishing Comic Crusader as long as I can see. It keeps my mind off my problem. I'd like to thank all the writers and artists who came to my aid in completing projects I was unable to finish.

Now there is a bright spot in my life! Last April 22nd, my wife Ellie presented me with a 4lb. 18 oz. baby girl! Jolene Laura Greim is brightness enough to dispel any darkness!

ITEM

An upcoming issue of "Crusader" will feature an in-depth history of Ibis the Invincible. Raymond Miller has compiled this article of Fawcett's ace man of magic and it promises to be a sensation!

ITEM

Craig Battmer uncovered the following information, while interviewing Frank Thorne. Craig asked who painted the covers for Gold Key's hero comics, Magnus, Doctor Solar, Mighty Samson, etc. Mr. Thorne's reply was...."Those dandy Gold Key covers are a tribute to Ed Marine the art director, as well as the artists who anonymously do them. I can't give specifics, but George Wilson does a lot of them. Matt Kalmenoff is another cover man. Both are Golden Magazine regulars. To do the covers, they generally use acrylics, on illustration board, with perhaps a coat or two of gesso."

PREVIEW

The following letter is in the way of a preview of upcoming articles in the "Foreign Fan-Fare" section of Comic Crusader.

My name is Paul Power. I am an art student and, like you, a comic collector. I'm also Australian. I hope to have some of my work in this fanzine of fanzines, Comic Crusader. But that is not what I'm hear to talk about. I'm about to tell you of some fantastic interviews which will be hitting these pages in the near future. I will be interviewing Stanley Pitt, Regg Pitt, John Dixon, Paul Wheelahan, Eric Jolliffe and others. You know of Stan and Regg Pit, I'm sure. But who are these others? Well, I'll tell you. They are all Australian artists and good friends of mine. First we have John Dixon, the artist-writer of Air Hawk and The Flying Doctor. Air Hawk is Australia's greatest comic strip. I won't tell you much more about Dixon, except that he started in comics at the age of 17 and that he wrote and drew Tim Valour for 150 issues. He then took over Catman in 1958. The rest you'll find out in my in-depth interview with Australia's own Jack Kirby, John Dixon. Paul Wheelahan worked with the Pitt brothers on a Tarzan type character called Yarmak. Paul was the last artist to quit the Aussie comic scene. You'll find out why, in my interview with Paul Wheelahan, artist-writer of the original Panther and The Raven. Eric Jolliffe is a fantastic humor artist. If I'm right, a Jolliffe cartoon will be printed in this issue. Jolliffe draws Salt-Bush Bill, Whichitee Tribe and Sandy Blight. All are humourous and very artistic. Well, until then, Pax - PAUL POWER

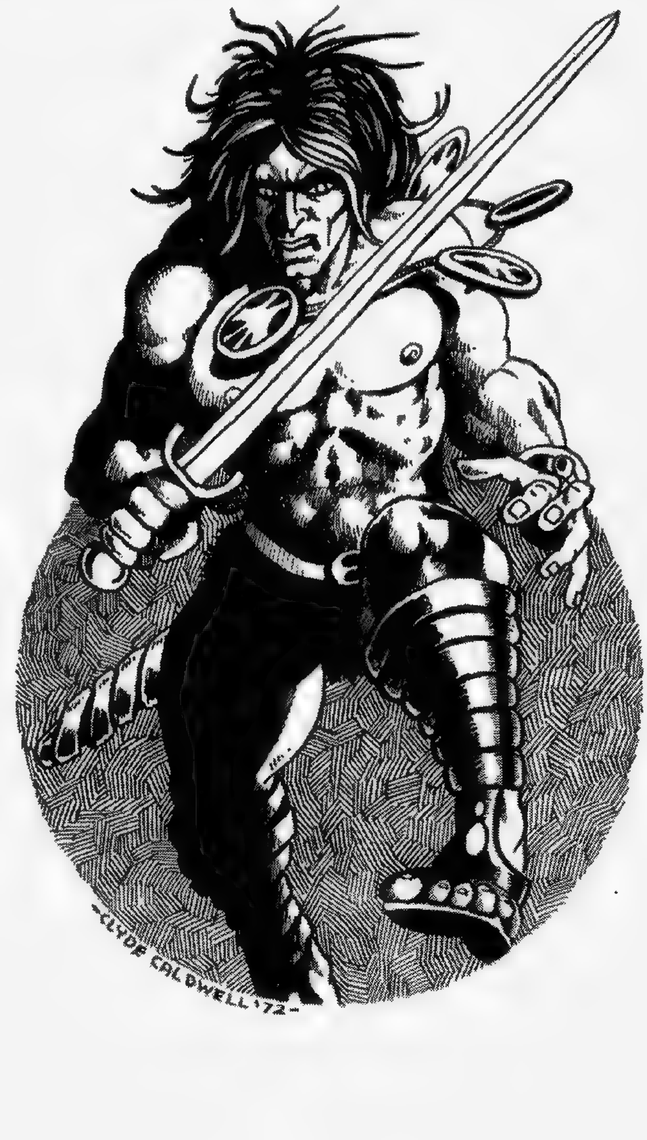
ITEM

The understanding of space travelers has improved since the Jan.-Feb., 1951 EC issue of Weird Fantasy #17. In this issue, there's a story by Wally Wood called "Deadlock". It's a story of how an earth ship meets an alien ship in deep space and how both are forced to destroy each other because each is afraid to lead the other to their home planet. Some years later, in Magnus #1, Russ Manning based his first "Aliens" strip on this story. The only difference being, Manning gave the story a happy ending, to insure the continuance of the strip. His solution, to the deadlock, was to have a few members of each race return to the others home planet, thus assuring peace. Tolerance comes to the comics.

ITEM

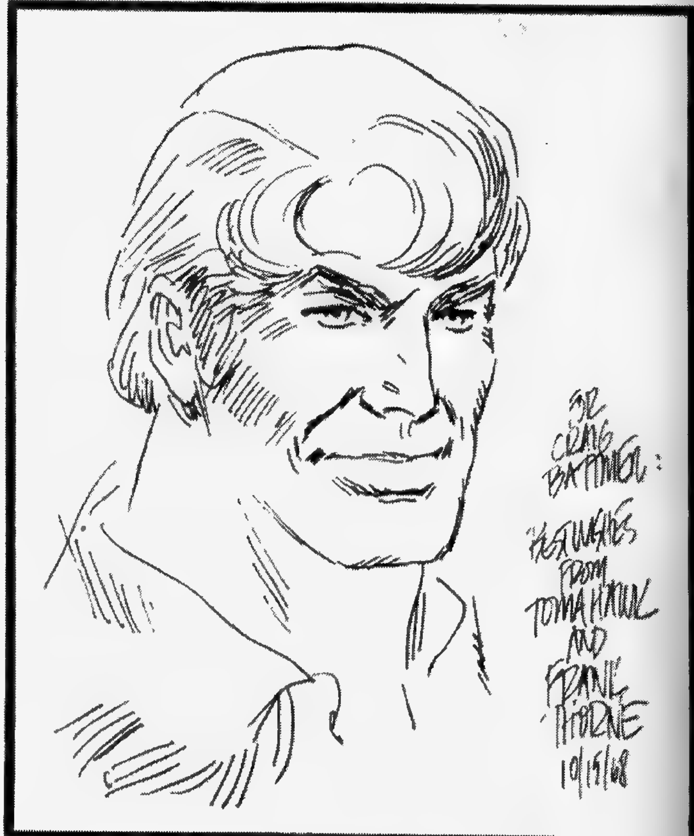
I'd like to thank staff member Anthony Kowalik for designing the beautiful logo for this column. It's great Tony...thanks!

While I've got the space, I'd like to recomend a publication I think is tops...THE BUYER'S GUIDE. This is what I consider fandom's number one adzine. You can obtain it by merely writing to ALAN LIGHT - RR#1 BOX 297 EAST MOLINE, ILL. 61244. Write today!



FRANK THORNE

an interview by craig battmer


TO CRAIG BATTMER:
BEST WISHES FROM TOMAHAWK AND FRANK THORNE
10/15/68

An extremely talented artist, but not as widely publicized as he should be; FRANK THORNE has worked on both newspaper strips and comics. His more notable comic book work consists of Mighty Samson, Tomahawk, Hawk-Son of Tomahawk and D.C.'s new book Korak, son of Tarzan!

CB - Mr. Thorne, what was your first job in comics?

FT - I started in 1951 with a syndicated strip, Perry Mason, for King Features. After that, I went over to Western Publishing (old Dell comics) and started with Flash Gordon and Jungle Jim. Most of my work, at this time was crummy, although 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and Moby Dick had some merit. I was struggling to get away from the Alex Raymond style, which I started out imitating.

CB - What exactly did you do concerning Flash Gordon for King Features, and what year was this?

FT - My work on Flash consisted of two full length comic books for Dell. Flash Gordon #2, May-July, 1953 and Flash Gordon #512, 1953. I also worked on "March of Comics" for King Features Syndicate (KK Pub.) #118, 1954 and #133, 1955. These were half size books that were given away as premiums in shoe stores.

CB - Do you enjoy doing Tomahawk?

FT - Love the Revolutionary War period...love most period stuff, (you know, costumes etc., of by-gone days). Tomahawk is fun to turn out, especially when we've got British soldiers. They had nifty uniforms.

CB - Has your art met with wide approval from fans?

FT - I don't know how to judge what "approval" is. I've worked on a number of issues of Tomahawk now, and have received a couple of dozen letters (one from you, bless you!). I never got a letter from my work on Samson, or anything at Dell-Gold Key. They (Western Pub.) have a policy of not encouraging fans.

CB - I'm sure you're aware that your style resembles that of Joe Kubert's a great deal. Has his work influenced your style at all?

FT - Craig, old fellow, this is the second time I've heard that my stuff looks like Joe's. I'm as amazed and flattered the second time as the first. I've never tried to copy Joe's stuff. Early in my career, I copied Raymond and another superb artist Neil O'Keefe. Joe's style was not mature then, in my imitating period. Joe Kubert is an artist of high rank, especially in the war drawings. It's an honor to be compared with him; an honor not deserved...Joe is at the top of his creative output.

CB - Are there any plans for Joe Kubert to ink any of your work?

FT - Joe inked the October issue of Tomahawk, #124. (Neal Adams cover) That's the first time I've ever colaborated with anyone. I prefer to ink my own work.

CB - Is your paper supplied by National Periodicals?

FT - I can buy it from them if I want, but I prefer strathmore 2 ply medium surface. This I cut to National's size. It costs 40¢ a ply. Medium surface is what I've been using.

CB - Have you got any favorite artists?

FT - There always seems to be a handful of first rate artists in comic books. They blossom and fade, come and go. I've always worked part time in comic books, and never really got to know all the stuff that was being put out over the years. A few names come to mind- Alex Toth, a great one in his prime (Zorro), Joe Kubert, Wally Wood, etc. Frazetta and guys like Drucker must've done good comic book stuff, but I've never seen it.

CB - Favorite inkers?

FT - None!

CB - What got you interested in comic book art?

FT - I just love to draw. Started out, as a kid readin' and a copyin' the only thing around me at the time... comic books! Will Eisner's Spirit was a marvel to me.

CB - Would you like to work for other companies?

FT - I do work regularly for Golden Magazine. Full color illustration. I free lance book jackets and do illustrations for Bell Telephone Co., National Council of Churches and advertising agencies.

CB - Was your work liked immediately at DC?

FT - Went there in '63 after my second syndicated strip folded (Dr. Bennett) and was turned away. Later Joe Kubert called me, and I started with a couple of war stories for him. They (Carmine, etc.) have greatly encouraged me.

CB - About how many pages do you turn out per day?

FT - If everything goes okay, I can pencil three pages a day...after some tightening up on the lettered pencil pages, I can ink three a day in good form.

CB - What type of samples did you present when trying for a job?

FT - When I went to see Joe, I had my illustration portfolio with me. The only comic book stuff I had was a couple of Mighty Samson issues. Samson is something special to me. It's the only character I had a part in starting. Otto Binder and I, with Matt Murphy, popped him into the world with gusto. I did 6 or 7 issues then left for greener pastures.

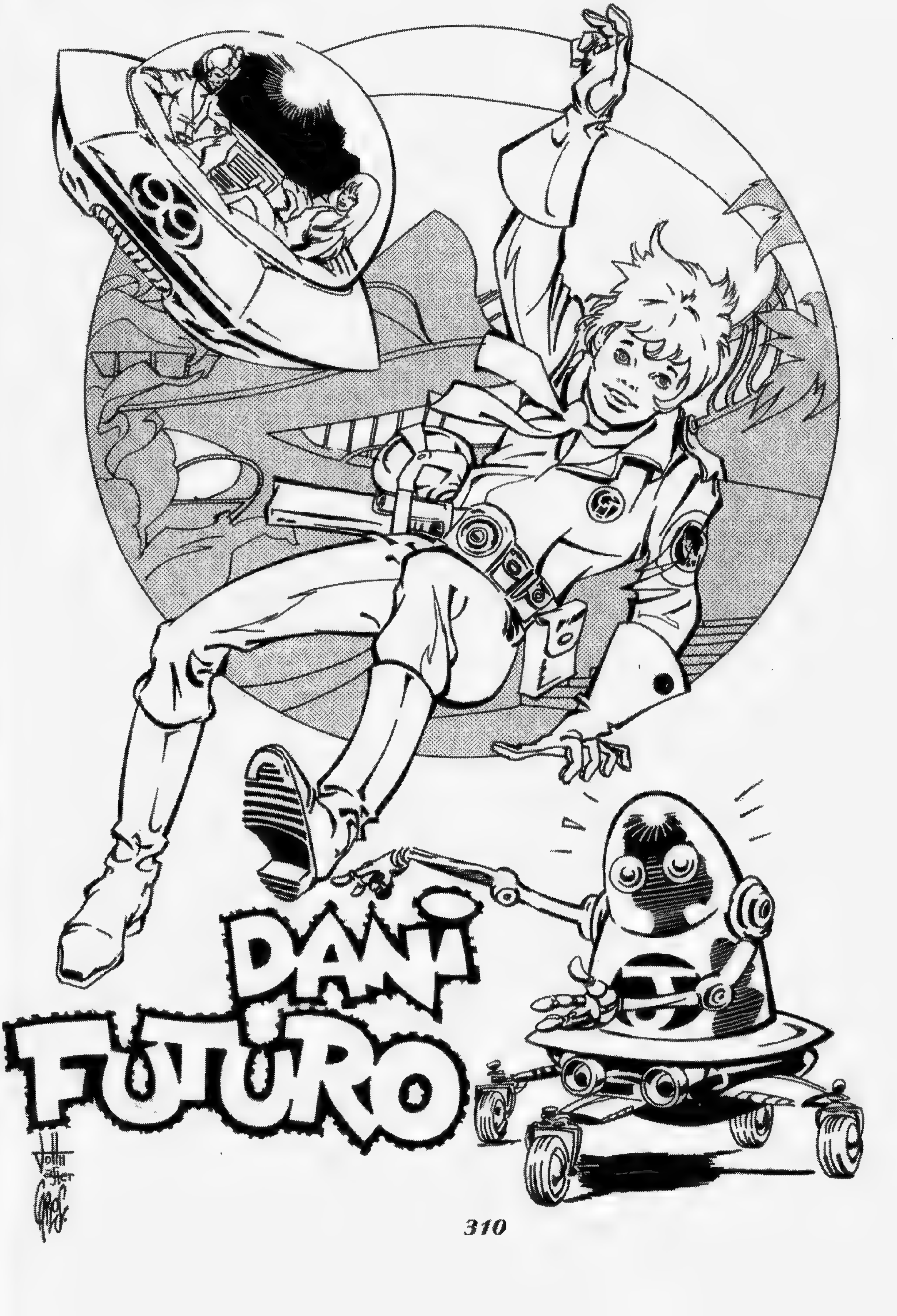
CB - Do you have any trouble drawing hands, feet, etc.?

FT - There are times when you can fly through a page with no problems. The snags come for me, when the page is badly designed or layed out. We are story tellers first, if the page isn't thought out in terms of dramatic action everything seems to go wrong...including hands, feet, etc.

CB - Have you any advice for aspiring artists wishing to become pro?

FT - Yes! Marry a very understanding woman.

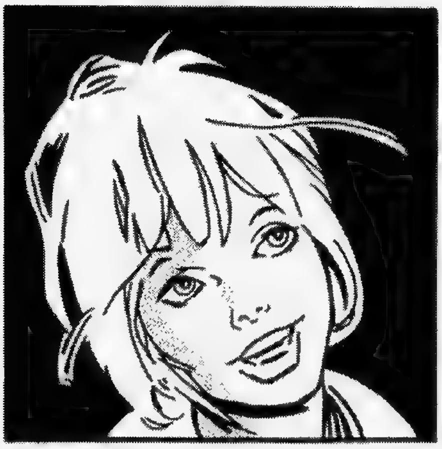
The saga of DANI FUTURO began with young Dani Blancor boarding a sea-plane to visit his father, Prof. Ricardo Blancor, at an arctic expedition. The plane's pilot becomes ill and passes out! As a result, the plane crashes into the ice. When Dani awakes he finds himself in the future. Iris, a young girl of this time, explains how the ice froze him in suspended animation and how an expedition found him and brought him back to life. This drawing, ala Carlos Gimenez, is by a talented Canadian artist John Byrne.



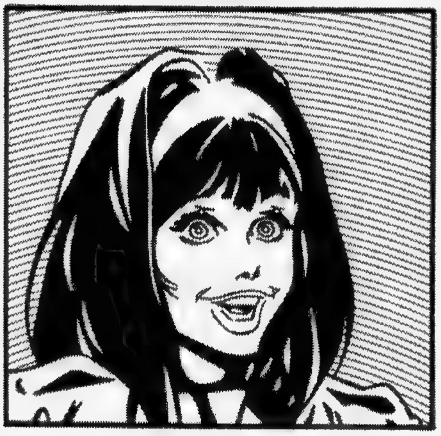
FOREIGN FAN-FARE

by john mansfield & martin l. greim

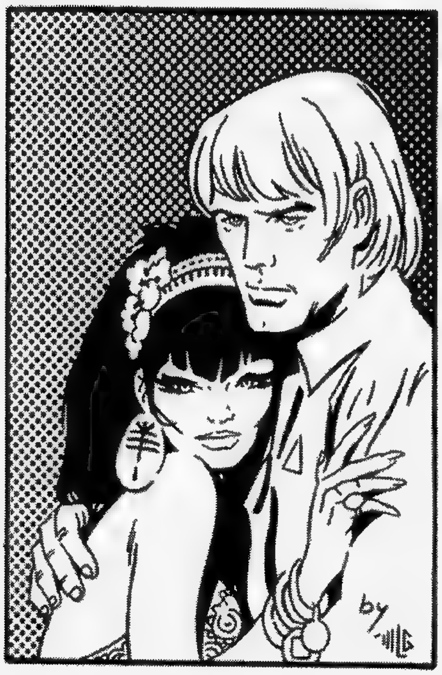
DANI FUTURO



IRIS



DELTA 99 & LU



With this first, in a series of articles on foreign comic art, COMIC CRUSADER is proud to present one of the top Spanish artists in the media. Those of you who have been reading Warren Publications lately, have noticed the increase of Spanish names on his staff. Their fantastic draftsmanship is an asset to Warren's books. Although he hasn't done any work for Warren yet, this artist's work is respected by many in the United States. Many of our own artists (Adams, Williamson and Adkins, etc.) have swiped illustrations from this talented artist.

PRESENTING...

CARLOS GIMENEZ ....."MAGICIAN OF THE COMIC STRIP"

CARLOS GIMENEZ was born in Madrid on the 6th of March, 1941. A fan of comic strips in his infancy, he dreamed of becoming a designer of them when he grew up. He went to work for the studio of Lopez Blanco, at an early age, and aided artist Garcia Pizarry y Zata. His first works were to continue the strips "Drake and Drake" and "Buck John". He was then author of "Gringo" and jumped to fame with the fantastic strip "Delta 99"! Since Delta 99 is the strip Carlos is best known for, let's stop a moment and talk a bit about it. Delta 99 first appeared as a Spanish comic book published by one of the two big publishing companies in Mexico, "Editora de Periodicos S.C.L. 'La Prensa', for the Transworld Feature Syndicate Inc". This beautifully drawn strip deals with the adventures of an interplanetary agent called Delta 99! Delta is sent to earth to prepare the planet for admission into an interstella confederation. Earth has reached the threshold of space and is now entitled to such a membership. To prepare earth, Delta 99 must combat evils that threaten the planet. After landing a small saucer craft in the Pacific Ocean, he meets a woman right out of "Terry and the Pirates"....Lu, the female pirate. Lu and her Oriental bandits aid Delta in his battles. It is only a short time before Delta and Lu fall in love. The Delta 99 series is in the James Bond tradition. There are beautiful women, fast cars, scientific gadgets, and a host of evil villains and villainesses. The strip ranges from adventure to science fiction to horror. In issue #11 for instance, there was a vampire story. Two sample pages from the Delta 99 strip are shown elsewhere in this article. Carlos did six issues of Delta 99 and collaborated with Adolfo Usero on five more. After leaving Delta, Carlos moved on to work on his next strip, "Dani Futuro".

Carlos is married and has two children. He is pleased with his way of life and is very happy drawing. Carlos' favorite comics, as a youngster, were those of Iranzo: "The History of Pepe's Family", "Captain Courageous", "Baye Kid", and above all else "El Cachorro"! The artists he admires most, of the Spaniards, are Bermejo and most of his friends in the comics profession. Of the foreigners, his favorites consist of Frank Robbins, Gir, Jije, Forest, Mezieres and Breccia. For the most part, Carlos's favorites are European. He admires the Americans as very good designers and as those who have taught them all. However, he believes that the American artists have stopped innovating and are producing the same things today that they have been producing for the last twenty years. In contrast, the European draftsmen are in a period of total experimentation. They are trying to give to the comics a new tone, or look, that American artists have never achieved. Like the European artists, Carlos' work shows his attention to technique, graphic innovation and color.

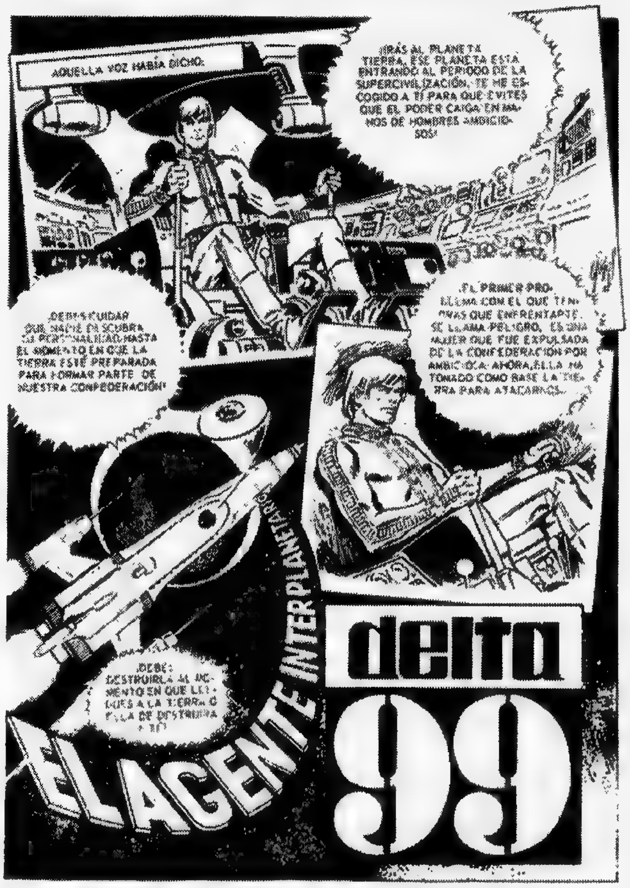
Carlos displays a great interest in science fiction. It is because this theme gives him the greatest freedom. He believes that unlike working with a theme where you must stay in a certain pattern, science fiction allows you to bring something new to the comic; your own particular concept of theme. "In science fiction", says Carlos, "you are able to take an idea that no one has drawn before and you are able to invent and create a world of your own art in which to experiment; and about which you can say it's your own!" Such experiments are shown to a great extent in Dani Futuro. However, because Dani is directed to the general public, Carlos' innovations are slow and progressive. This is so the reader can easily assimilate them. Even though he is a superb draftsman, Carlos is still restricted, in that he must always create something of commercial value.

Carlos works much like American artists when doing a strip. He first reads the story, (or guide, as the Spanish call it) so he is fully informed of what he must put on each page. Next, he roughs in the figures and backgrounds. Then, with pen and chalk he fills in the detail. His final step is to add the color. Unlike most American artists, Carlos does all the work from start to finish.

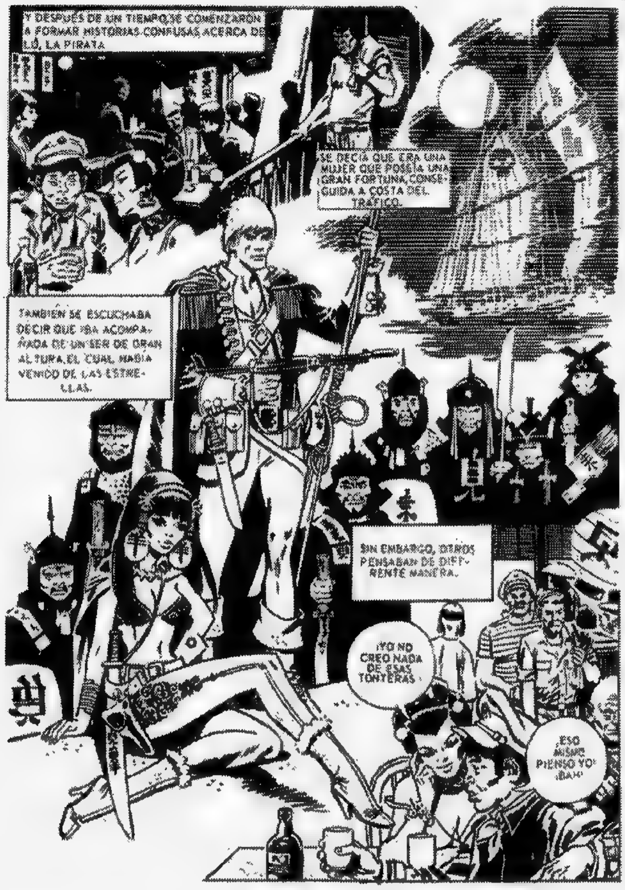
A short time ago, an interview with Carlos was conducted at his chalet in Premia'. With his wife, Mely, at his side, Carlos answered a number of questions. A portion of that interview is reprinted here, for your enjoyment.

Q: How did you decide on your profession, Carlos?
A: This is what I always wanted to be! Even as a child, I always wanted to

First page from Delta 99 #1. It shows him getting his assignment on earth, via mental communication.


AQUELLA VOZ HABÍA DICHO:
¡IRÁS AL PLANETA TIERRA, ESE PLANETA ESTÁ ENTRANDO AL PERIODO DE LA SUPERCIVILIZACIÓN. TE HE ESCOGIDO A TI PARA QUE EVITES QUE EL PODER CAIGA EN MANOS DE HOMBRES AMBICIOSOS!
¡DEBES CUIDAR QUE NADIE DESCUBRA SU PERSONALIDAD HASTA EL MOMENTO EN QUE LA TIERRA ESTÉ PREPARADA PARA FORMAR PARTE DE NUESTRA CONFEDERACIÓN!
¡EL PRIMER PROBLEMA CON EL QUE TENDRÁS QUE ENFRENTARTE, SE LLAMA PELIGRO. ES UNA MUJER QUE FUE EXPULSADA DE LA CONFEDERACIÓN POR AMBICIOSA. AHORA, ELLA HA TOMADO COMO BASE LA TIERRA PARA ATACARNOS.
¡DEBES DESTRUIRLA AL MOMENTO EN QUE LLEGUES A LA TIERRA O ELLA TE DESTRUIRÁ A TI!
EL AGENTE INTERPLANETARIO
delta
99

Another page from the same issue. This page shows Delta 99 with Lu and her pirate crew.


Y DESPUÉS DE UN TIEMPO, SE COMENZARON A FORMAR HISTORIAS CONFUSAS ACERCA DE LÚ, LA PIRATA.
SE DECÍA QUE ERA UNA MUJER QUE POSEÍA UNA GRAN FORTUNA, CONSEGUIDA A COSTA DEL TRÁFICO.
TAMBIÉN SE ESCUCHABA DECIR QUE IBA ACOMPAÑADA DE UN SER DE GRAN ALTURA, EL CUAL HABÍA VENIDO DE LAS ESTRELLAS.
SIN EMBARGO, OTROS PENSABAN DE DIFERENTE MANERA.
¡YO NO CREO NADA DE ESAS TONTERAS!
¡ESO MISMO PIENSO YO! ¡BAH!

to be a designer. Not just any kind of a designer - a painter or an illustrator, but a comic book designer! At 10 years old I began drawing my own comic strips and even created my own mythical ads to place in them. I was an unconditional admirer of G. Iranzo and on certain occasions copied completely the pictures from his "Rayo Kid".

Q: Do you believe you have reached the summit of your profession?

A: No! I admire and respect too many people in the world of international comics, for me to be satisfied with my work. I study these artists, much the same way a surgeon studies books on surgery, always trying to improve myself. I live for the comic strip! I design, I read, I discuss, I criticize and defend the comic strip!

Q: How did you begin in the comic strip field?

A: I began by decorating porcelain in a shop in Madrid. This served me very well and allowed me to learn the use of the brush. One day I took my poor and humble drawings and presented them at the house of the man who was to become my great friend and teacher, Lopez Blanco. Lopez gave me my start in comic books. He taught me panel order and how to design a story page. He opened the door for me to become a professional. I was further aided by other designers in the field, Jose Carlos, Pizarro and Zata. My first work, on my own, was a series of curiosities for the agency Ibergraf, S.A. of Madrid. And then, for the same agency, I did part of the work on Drake and Drake, which was being made in collaboration with Pizarro and Jose Carlos.

Q: How did you become known in foreign circles?

A: Through Gallardo; a strip designed for people in France. Some of the series of Buck John and Drake and Drake were also published in other countries.

Q: What do you consider your major commercial success?

A: "Gringo" was the series in which I reached my major commercial success. I believe it is published in 18 different countries. I didn't receive much money for this strip, but it did get my work known outside of Spain.

Q: After "Gringo", what was your next success?

A: I began working with Flores Thies on a new series for Illustrated Selections. This new character was the one that best made my name known outside of Spain. The character was Delta 99! "Gringo" in spite of being a national product, passed through Spain in 5 different versions and often was used as a filler. My name was almost unnoticed, where on Delta 99 it was not!

Q: Please tell us of the birth of Delta.

A: I always wanted Delta to be a type of James Bond; devoted to the security and peace of all the world. An agent going through the stars, to save the world from itself. Flores Thies, the writer of the series, wished to give it a character of science fiction, with more fantastic elements such as monsters, snow men, robot women and great computer organizations. I was never in accord with this idea, because all that would be left would be a character of a dehumanized personality. The creation of Delta 99 gave all concerned a headache. The story was reformed many times before the final story line was set. In creating our central figure, we pictured a young man, an "in" person in his exterior, with all the attributes of a romantic gallent and all the elements of the modern hero.

Q: What are your own interests?

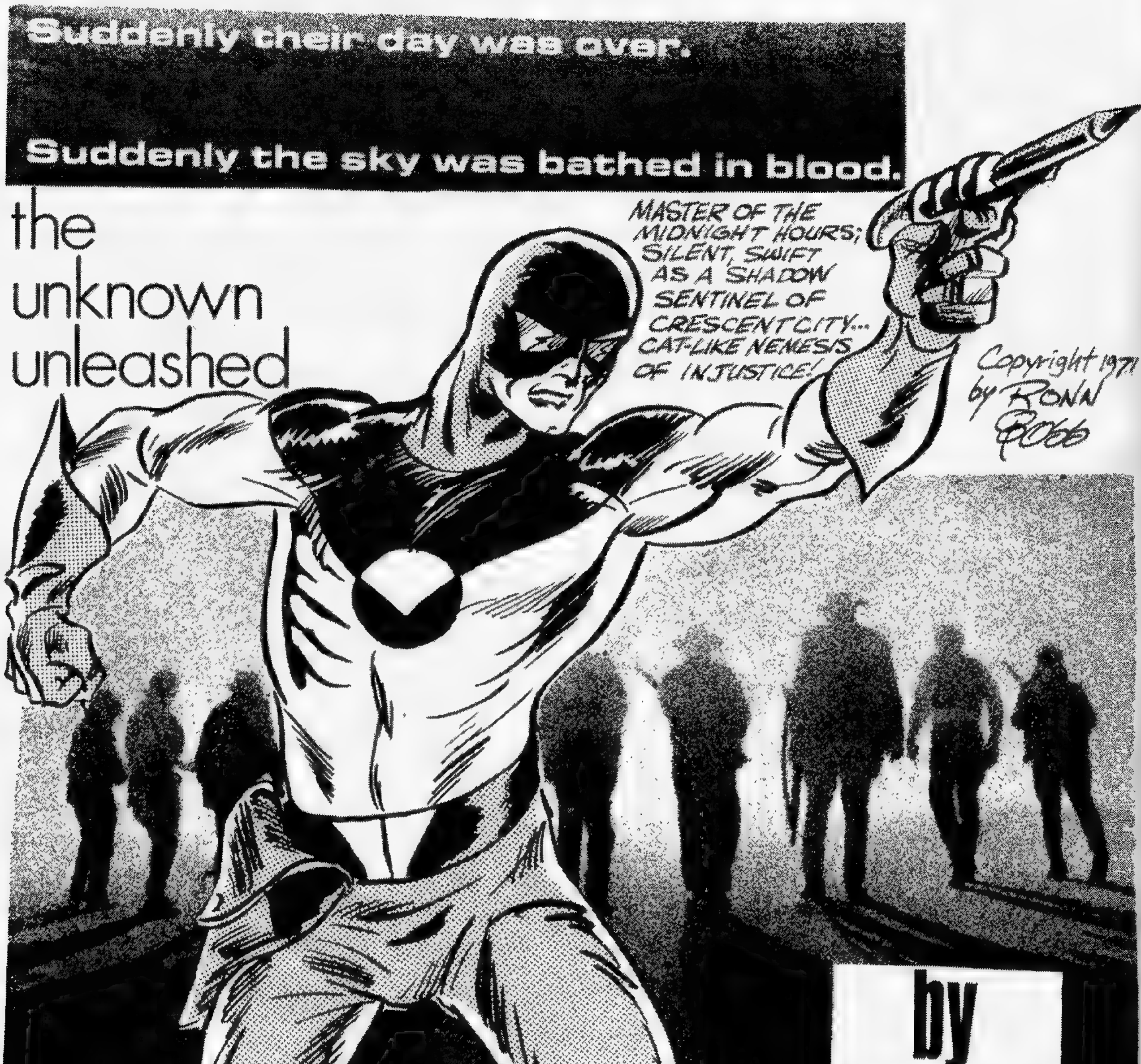
A: I'm enthusiastic about science fiction and try to show it in my work.

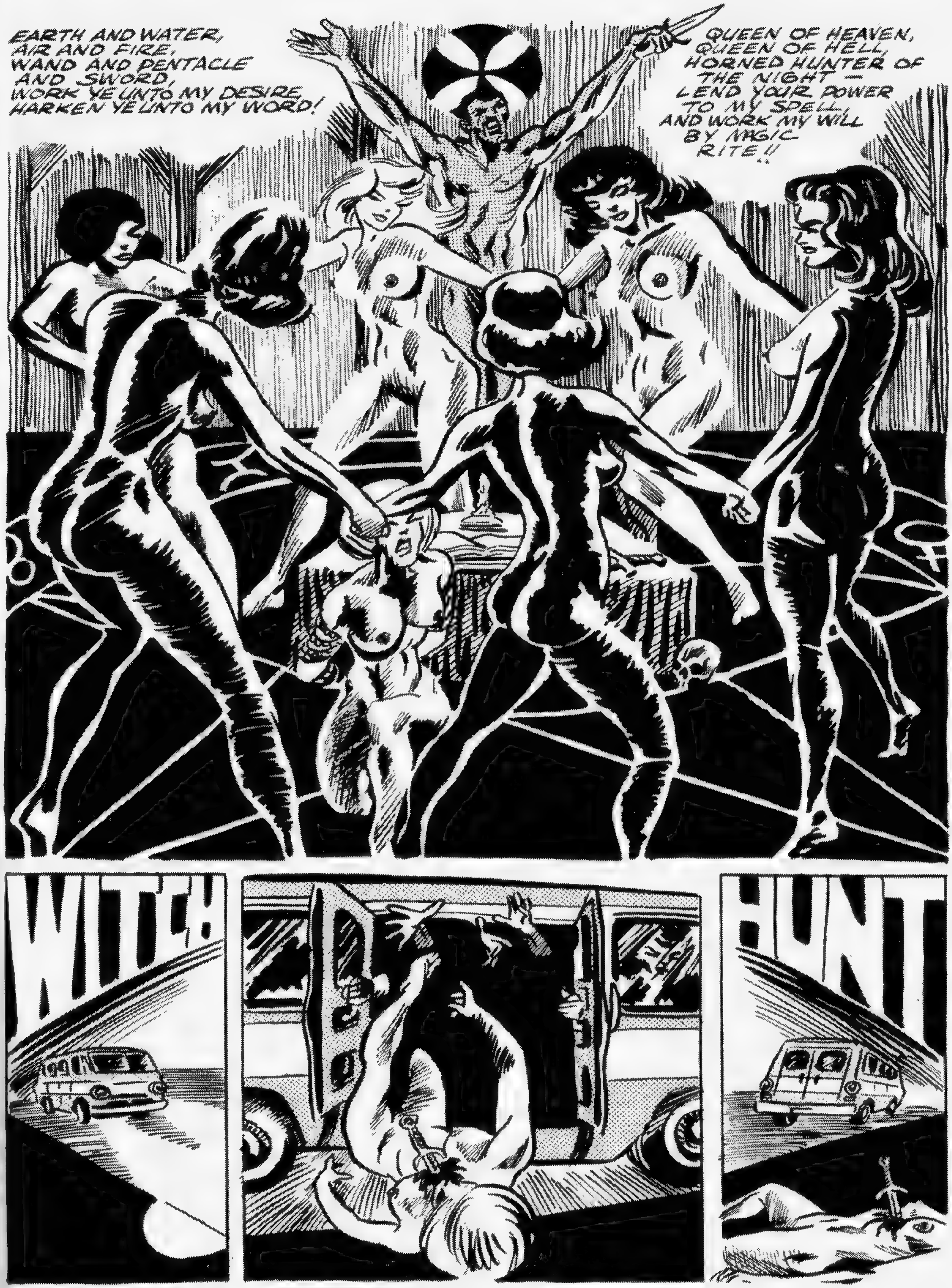
Q: What work are you now doing?

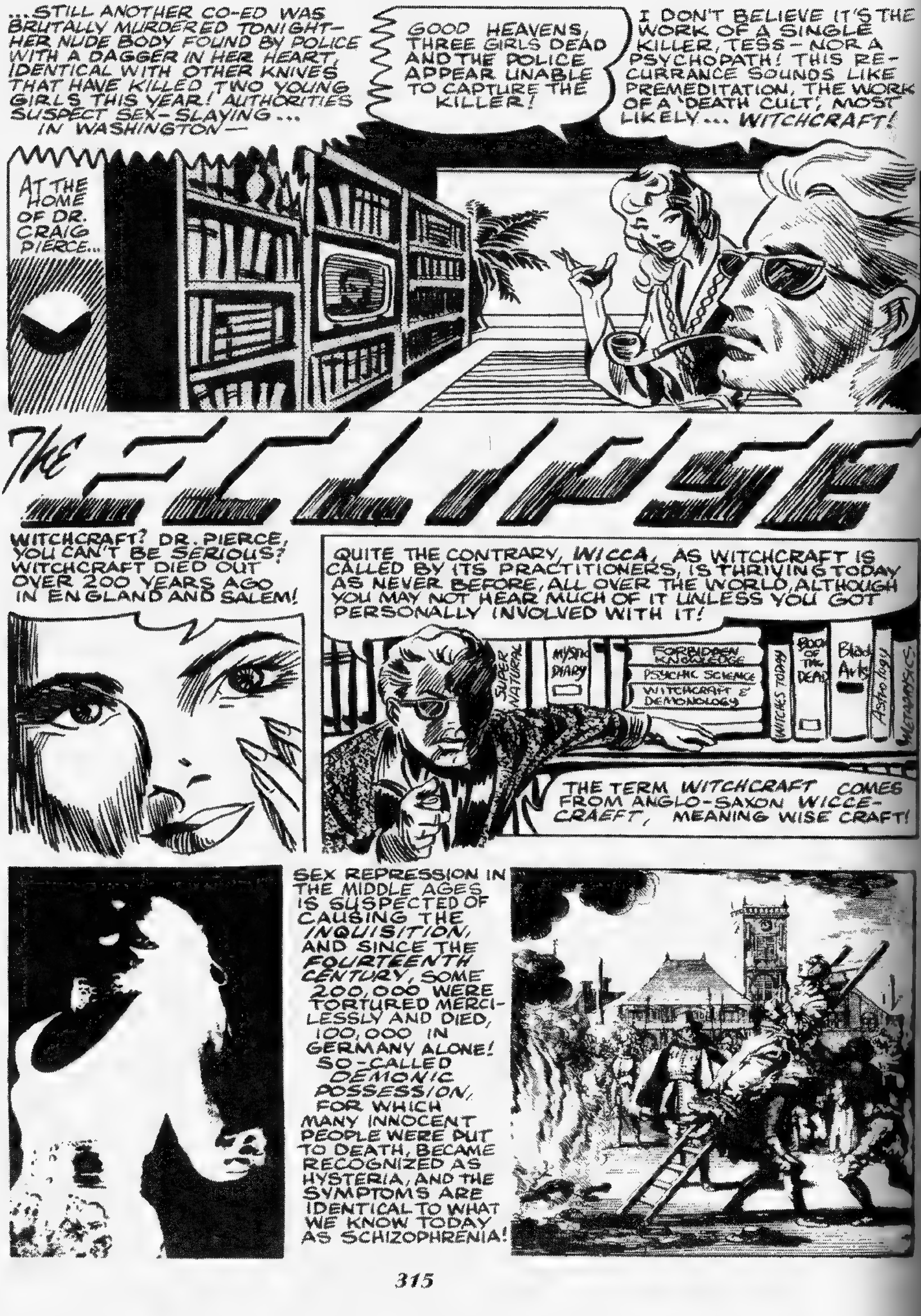
A: I am working on a science fiction series, which tells of the adventures of a boy of our time, who flies with a float plane into the artic and becomes frozen in the ice. He recovers, thanks to certain aides, more than 100 years into the future. A perfect scene for this type of adventure. The young hero is accompanied on his adventures by a young girl from the future named Iris. The story is by Roca, a pseudonym for a great writer, with whom I've always wanted to work. It will be published all in color. The title is "Dani Futuro"!

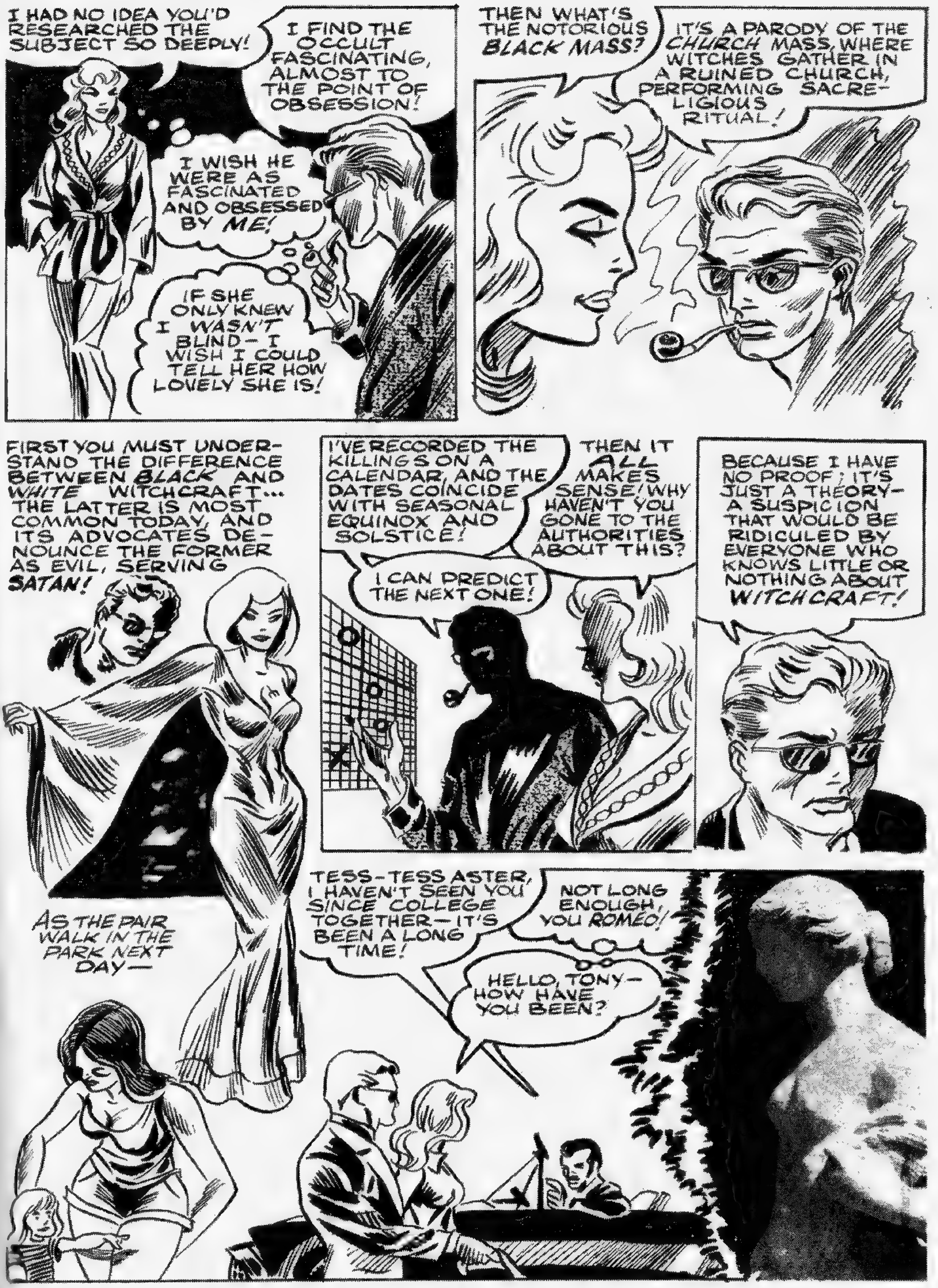
Carlos went on to describe the great amount of work that goes into producing a comic. He also thought that a body of criticism should be formed in Spanish fanzines, to judge the work in comics. Just as literature is criticized, so should comics. This would make for better new comics.

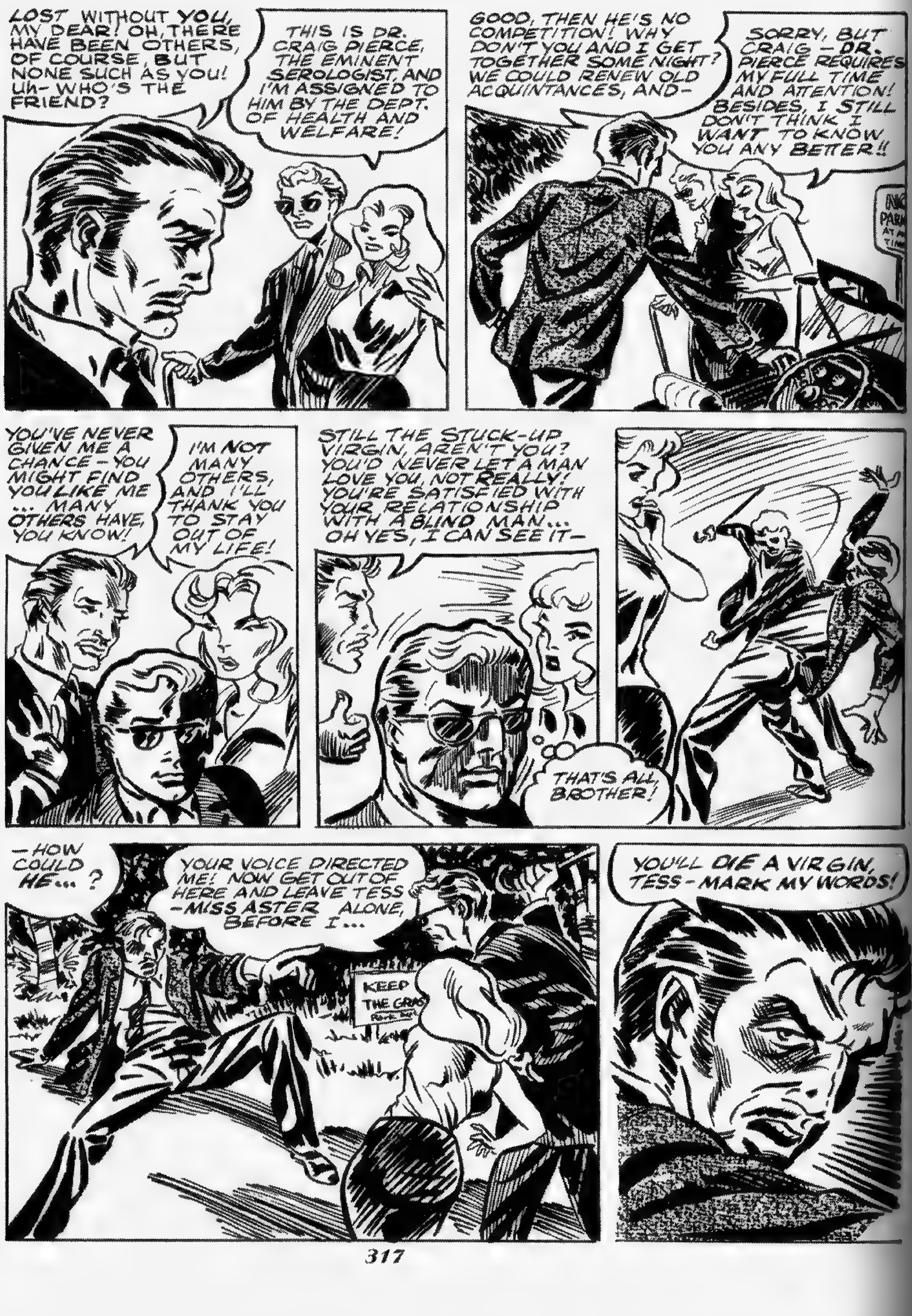
With the interview ended, let's talk a bit about "Dani Futuro" and Delta 99. Delta 99 is a black and white comic, written in Spanish. The first issue was published in November of 1968. If you have any friends in Mexico, you might ask them to try and pick up some copies for you. "Dani Futuro" saw print in a magazine called "tintin" that can be obtained in Canada.

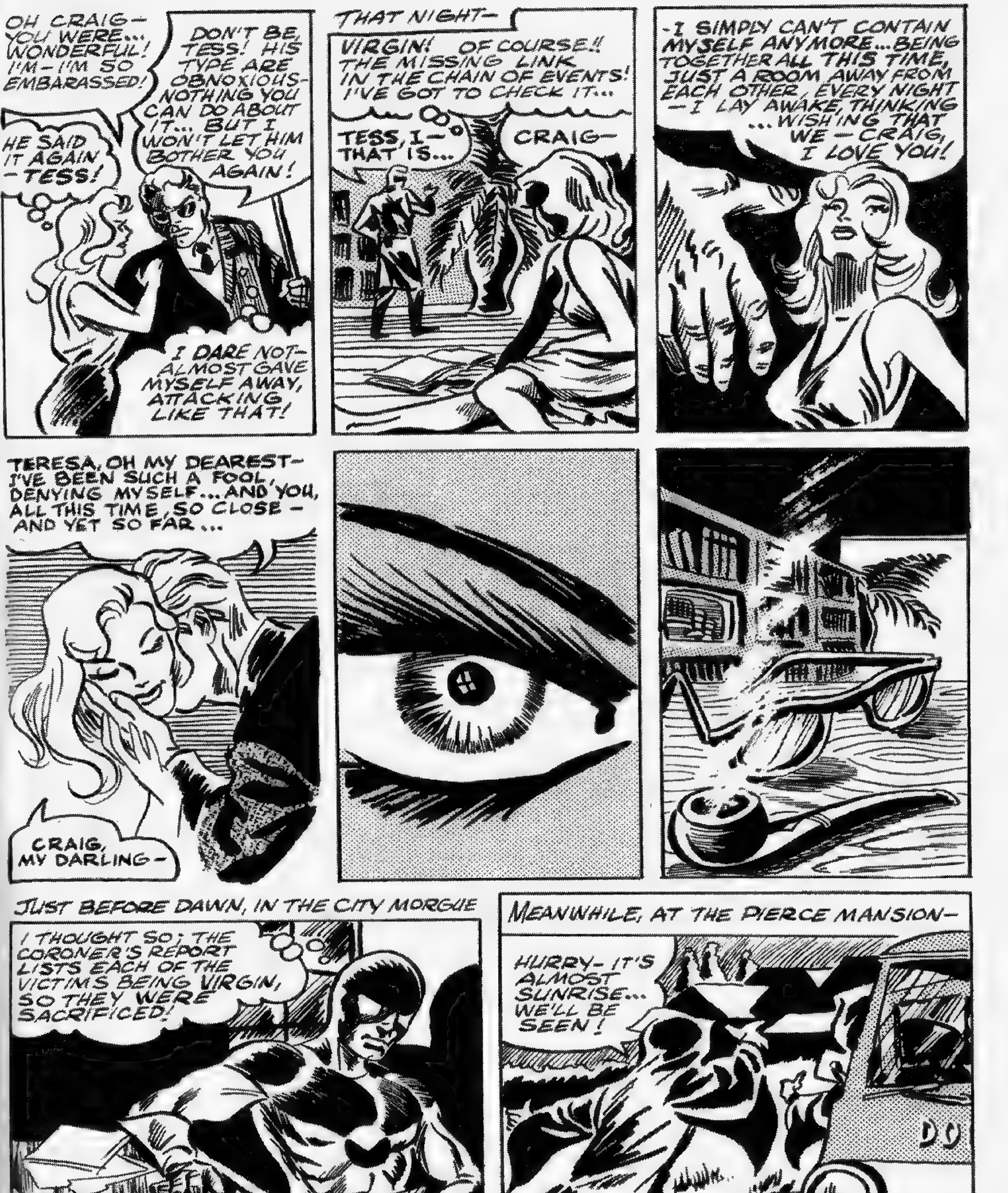

Suddenly their day was over.
Suddenly the sky was bathed in blood.
the unknown unleashed
MASTER OF THE MIDNIGHT HOURS; SILENT, SWIFT AS A SHADOW SENTINEL OF CRESCENT CITY... CAT-LIKE NEMESIS OF INJUSTICE!
Copyright 1971 by RONN FOSS
by popular demand
Eclipse
Suddenly it was sundown

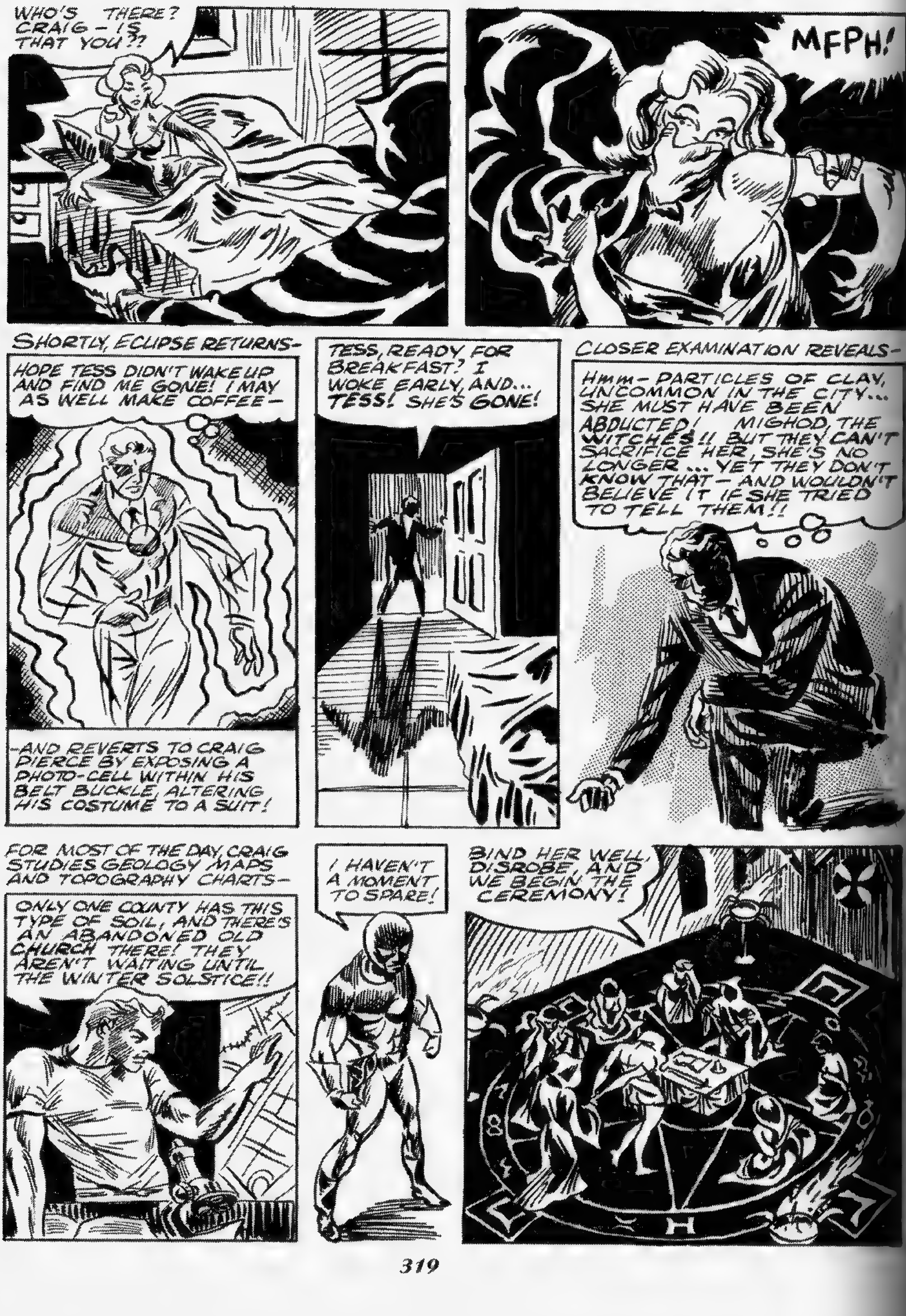

EARTH AND WATER,
AIR AND FIRE,
WAND AND PENTACLE
AND SWORD,
WORK YE UNTO MY DESIRE,
HARKEN YE UNTO MY WORD!
QUEEN OF HEAVEN,
QUEEN OF HELL,
HORNED HUNTER OF
THE NIGHT —
LEND YOUR POWER
TO MY SPELL,
AND WORK MY WILL
BY MAGIC
RITE!!
WITCH
HUNT

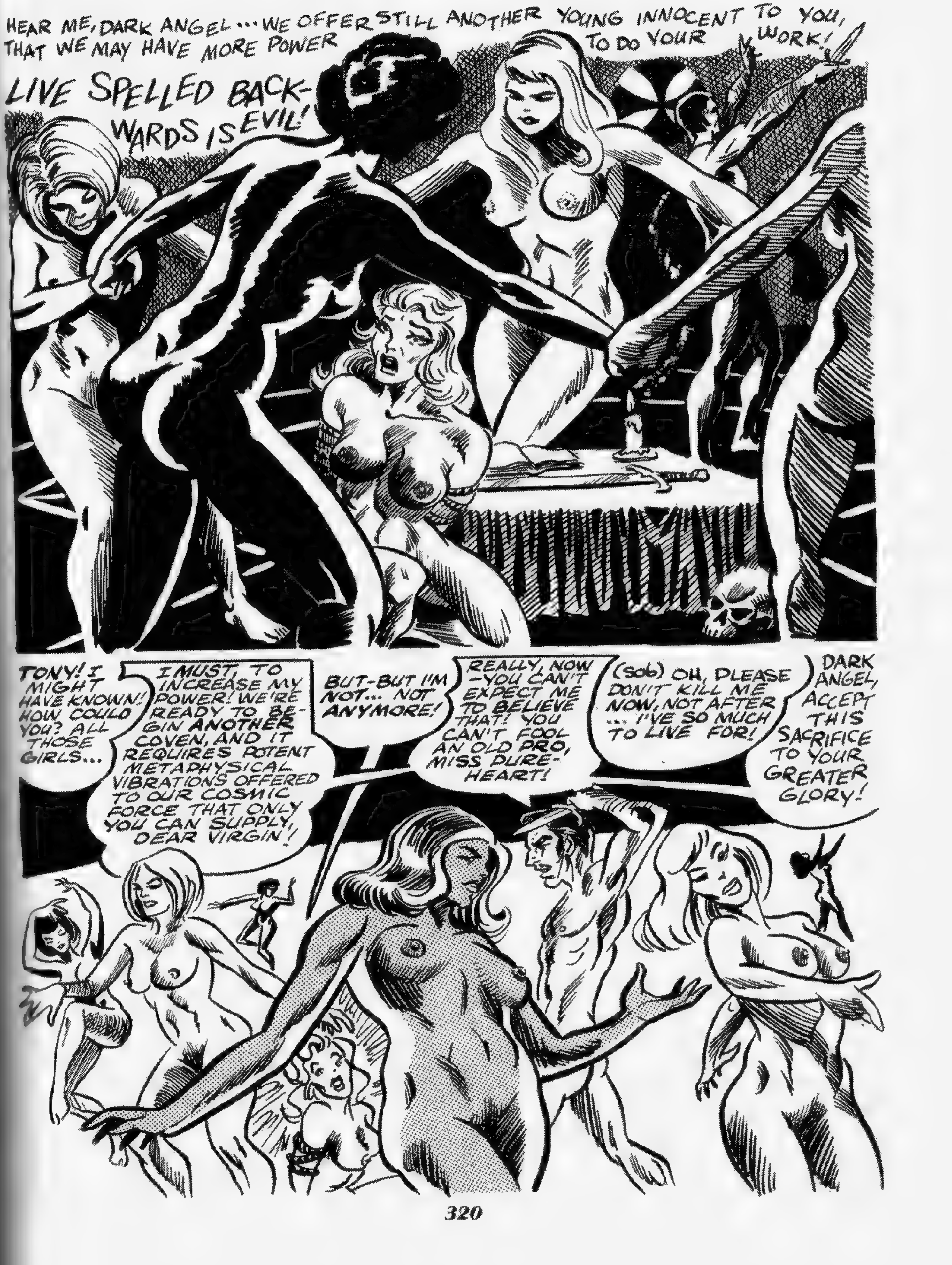

...STILL ANOTHER CO-ED WAS BRUTALLY MURDERED TONIGHT—HER NUDE BODY FOUND BY POLICE WITH A DAGGER IN HER HEART, IDENTICAL WITH OTHER KNIVES THAT HAVE KILLED TWO YOUNG GIRLS THIS YEAR! AUTHORITIES SUSPECT SEX-SLAYING... IN WASHINGTON—
GOOD HEAVENS, THREE GIRLS DEAD AND THE POLICE APPEAR UNABLE TO CAPTURE THE KILLER!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT'S THE WORK OF A SINGLE KILLER, TESS—NOR A PSYCHOPATH! THIS RECURRANCE SOUNDS LIKE PREMEDITATION, THE WORK OF A 'DEATH CULT', MOST LIKELY... WITCHCRAFT!
AT THE HOME OF DR. CRAIG PIERCE...
THE ECLIPSE
WITCHCRAFT? DR. PIERCE, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS? WITCHCRAFT DIED OUT OVER 200 YEARS AGO IN ENGLAND AND SALEM!
QUITE THE CONTRARY, WICCA, AS WITCHCRAFT IS CALLED BY ITS PRACTITIONERS, IS THRIVING TODAY AS NEVER BEFORE, ALL OVER THE WORLD, ALTHOUGH YOU MAY NOT HEAR MUCH OF IT UNLESS YOU GOT PERSONALLY INVOLVED WITH IT!
SUPER NATURAL
MYSTIC DIARY
FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE
PSYCHIC SCIENCE
WITCHCRAFT & DEMONOLOGY
WITCHES TODAY
BOOK OF THE DEAD
Black Arts
Astrology
METAPHYSICS
THE TERM WITCHCRAFT COMES FROM ANGLO-SAXON WICCECRAEFT, MEANING WISE CRAFT!
SEX REPRESSION IN THE MIDDLE AGES IS SUSPECTED OF CAUSING THE INQUISITION, AND SINCE THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, SOME 200,000 WERE TORTURED MERCILESSLY AND DIED, 100,000 IN GERMANY ALONE! SO-CALLED DEMONIC POSSESSION, FOR WHICH MANY INNOCENT PEOPLE WERE PUT TO DEATH, BECAME RECOGNIZED AS HYSTERIA, AND THE SYMPTOMS ARE IDENTICAL TO WHAT WE KNOW TODAY AS SCHIZOPHRENIA!

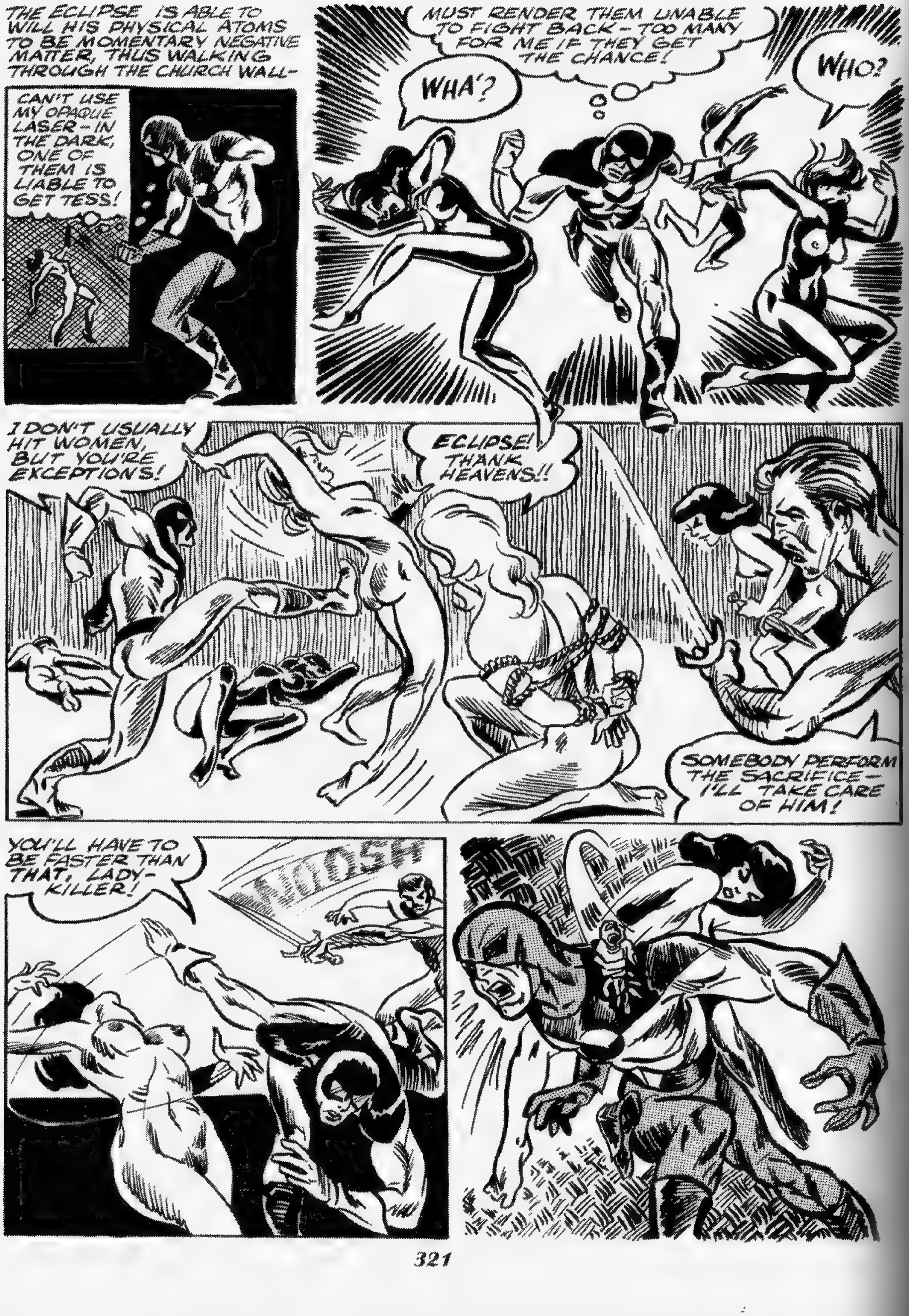

I HAD NO IDEA YOU'D RESEARCHED THE SUBJECT SO DEEPLY!
I FIND THE OCCULT FASCINATING, ALMOST TO THE POINT OF OBSESSION!
I WISH HE WERE AS FASCINATED AND OBSESSED BY *ME*!
IF SHE ONLY KNEW I *WASN'T* BLIND— I WISH I COULD TELL HER HOW LOVELY SHE IS!
THEN WHAT'S THE NOTORIOUS *BLACK MASS*?
IT'S A PARODY OF THE *CHURCH* MASS, WHERE WITCHES GATHER IN A RUINED CHURCH, PERFORMING SACRE-LIGIOUS RITUAL!
FIRST YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *BLACK* AND *WHITE* WITCHCRAFT... THE LATTER IS MOST COMMON TODAY, AND ITS ADVOCATES DENOUNCE THE FORMER AS EVIL, SERVING **SATAN**!
I'VE RECORDED THE KILLINGS ON A CALENDAR, AND THE DATES COINCIDE WITH SEASONAL EQUINOX AND SOLSTICE!
THEN IT *ALL* MAKES SENSE! WHY HAVEN'T YOU GONE TO THE AUTHORITIES ABOUT THIS?
I CAN PREDICT THE NEXT ONE!
BECAUSE I HAVE NO PROOF; IT'S JUST A THEORY— A SUSPICION THAT WOULD BE RIDICULED BY EVERYONE WHO KNOWS LITTLE OR NOTHING ABOUT *WITCHCRAFT*!
AS THE PAIR WALK IN THE PARK NEXT DAY—
TESS—TESS ASTER, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE COLLEGE TOGETHER— IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME!
NOT LONG ENOUGH, YOU *ROMEO*!
HELLO, TONY— HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

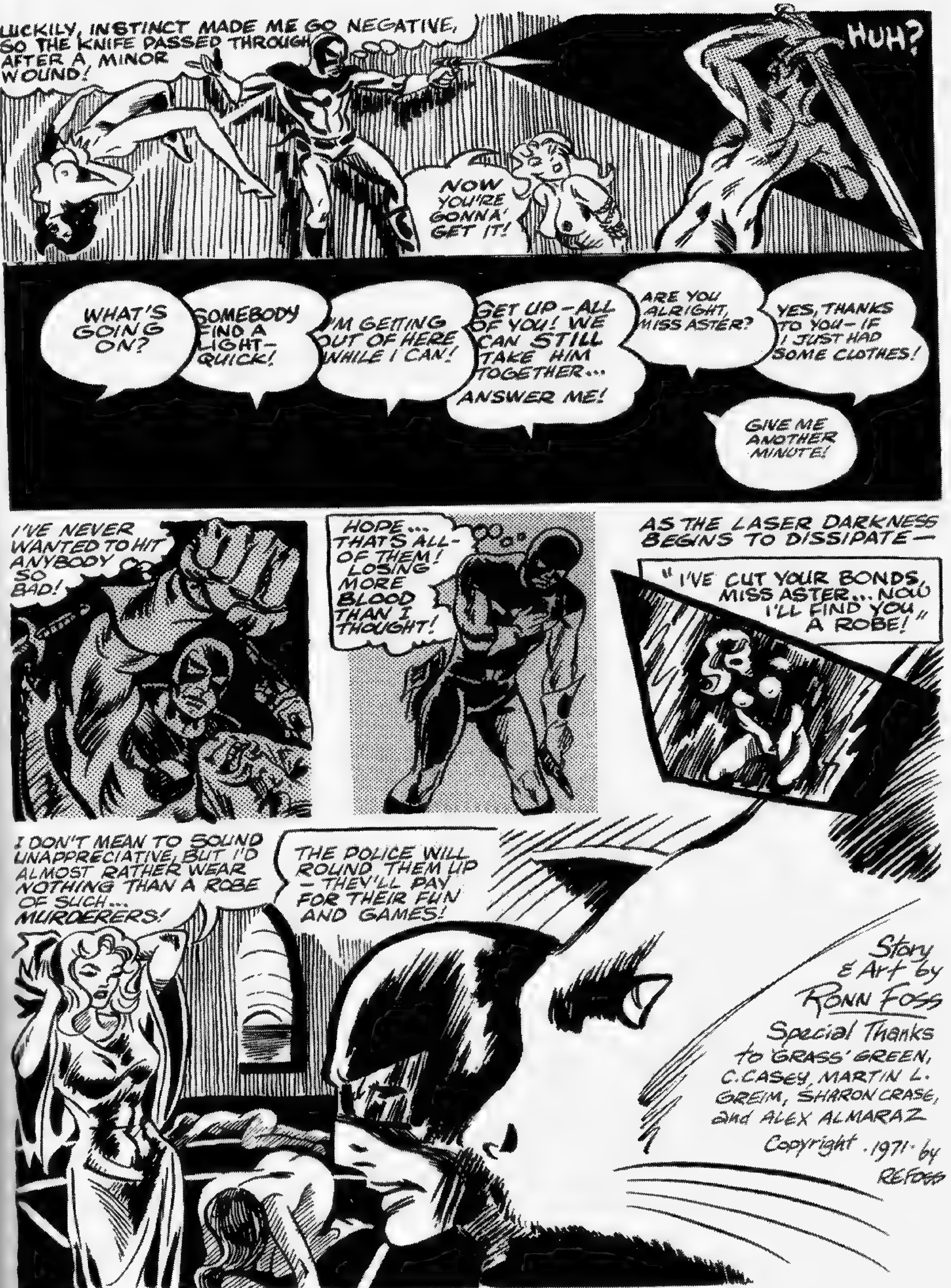

LOST WITHOUT YOU, MY DEAR! OH, THERE HAVE BEEN OTHERS, OF COURSE, BUT NONE SUCH AS YOU! UH- WHO'S THE FRIEND?
THIS IS DR. CRAIG PIERCE, THE EMINENT SEROLOGIST, AND I'M ASSIGNED TO HIM BY THE DEPT. OF HEALTH AND WELFARE!
GOOD, THEN HE'S NO COMPETITION! WHY DON'T YOU AND I GET TOGETHER SOME NIGHT? WE COULD RENEW OLD ACQUINTANCES, AND-
SORRY, BUT CRAIG - DR. PIERCE REQUIRES MY FULL TIME AND ATTENTION! BESIDES, I STILL DON'T THINK I WANT TO KNOW YOU ANY BETTER!!
NO PARK AT A TIM
YOU'VE NEVER GIVEN ME A CHANCE - YOU MIGHT FIND YOU LIKE ME ... MANY OTHERS HAVE, YOU KNOW!
I'M NOT MANY OTHERS, AND I'LL THANK YOU TO STAY OUT OF MY LIFE!
STILL THE STUCK-UP VIRGIN, AREN'T YOU? YOU'D NEVER LET A MAN LOVE YOU, NOT REALLY! YOU'RE SATISFIED WITH YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH A BLIND MAN... OH YES, I CAN SEE IT-
THAT'S ALL, BROTHER!
- HOW COULD HE... ?
YOUR VOICE DIRECTED ME! NOW GET OUT OF HERE AND LEAVE TESS -MISS ASTER ALONE, BEFORE I...
KEEP THE GRAS
YOU'LL DIE A VIRGIN, TESS - MARK MY WORDS!


OH CRAIG— YOU WERE... WONDERFUL! I'M—I'M SO EMBARASSED!
DON'T BE, TESS! HIS TYPE ARE OBNOXIOUS— NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT... BUT I WON'T LET HIM BOTHER YOU AGAIN!
HE SAID IT AGAIN —TESS!
I DARE NOT— ALMOST GAVE MYSELF AWAY, ATTACKING LIKE THAT!
THAT NIGHT—
VIRGIN! OF COURSE!! THE MISSING LINK IN THE CHAIN OF EVENTS! I'VE GOT TO CHECK IT...
TESS, I— THAT IS...
CRAIG—
—I SIMPLY CAN'T CONTAIN MYSELF ANYMORE... BEING TOGETHER ALL THIS TIME, JUST A ROOM AWAY FROM EACH OTHER, EVERY NIGHT —I LAY AWAKE, THINKING ...WISHING THAT WE—CRAIG, I LOVE YOU!
TERESA, OH MY DEAREST— I'VE BEEN SUCH A FOOL, DENYING MYSELF... AND YOU, ALL THIS TIME, SO CLOSE — AND YET SO FAR...
CRAIG, MY DARLING—
JUST BEFORE DAWN, IN THE CITY MORGUE
I THOUGHT SO; THE CORONER'S REPORT LISTS EACH OF THE VICTIMS BEING VIRGIN, SO THEY WERE SACRIFICED!
ANTED
WANT
BY THE FBI
Brown
MEANWHILE, AT THE PIERCE MANSION—
HURRY— IT'S ALMOST SUNRISE... WE'LL BE SEEN!
5


WHO'S THERE? CRAIG — IS THAT YOU??
MFPH!
SHORTLY, ECLIPSE RETURNS—
HOPE TESS DIDN'T WAKE UP AND FIND ME GONE! I MAY AS WELL MAKE COFFEE—
—AND REVERTS TO CRAIG PIERCE BY EXPOSING A PHOTO-CELL WITHIN HIS BELT BUCKLE, ALTERING HIS COSTUME TO A SUIT!
TESS, READY FOR BREAKFAST? I WOKE EARLY, AND... TESS! SHE'S GONE!
CLOSER EXAMINATION REVEALS—
Hmm— PARTICLES OF CLAY, UNCOMMON IN THE CITY... SHE MUST HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED! MIGHOD, THE WITCHES!! BUT THEY CAN'T SACRIFICE HER, SHE'S NO LONGER ... YET THEY DON'T KNOW THAT — AND WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT IF SHE TRIED TO TELL THEM!!
FOR MOST OF THE DAY, CRAIG STUDIES GEOLOGY MAPS AND TOPOGRAPHY CHARTS—
ONLY ONE COUNTY HAS THIS TYPE OF SOIL, AND THERE'S AN ABANDONED OLD CHURCH THERE! THEY AREN'T WAITING UNTIL THE WINTER SOLSTICE!!
I HAVEN'T A MOMENT TO SPARE!
BIND HER WELL, DISROBE, AND WE BEGIN THE CEREMONY!


HEAR ME, DARK ANGEL... WE OFFER STILL ANOTHER YOUNG INNOCENT TO YOU, THAT WE MAY HAVE MORE POWER TO DO YOUR WORK!
LIVE SPELLED BACKWARDS IS EVIL!
TONY! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN! HOW COULD YOU? ALL THOSE GIRLS...
I MUST, TO INCREASE MY POWER! WE'RE READY TO BEGIN ANOTHER COVEN, AND IT REQUIRES POTENT METAPHYSICAL VIBRATIONS OFFERED TO OUR COSMIC FORCE THAT ONLY YOU CAN SUPPLY, DEAR VIRGIN!
BUT-BUT I'M NOT... NOT ANYMORE!
REALLY, NOW —YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT! YOU CAN'T FOOL AN OLD PRO, MISS PURE-HEART!
(sob) OH, PLEASE DON'T KILL ME NOW, NOT AFTER... I'VE SO MUCH TO LIVE FOR!
DARK ANGEL, ACCEPT THIS SACRIFICE TO YOUR GREATER GLORY!


THE ECLIPSE IS ABLE TO WILL HIS PHYSICAL ATOMS TO BE MOMENTARY NEGATIVE MATTER, THUS WALKING THROUGH THE CHURCH WALL—
CAN'T USE MY OPAQUE LASER—IN THE DARK, ONE OF THEM IS LIABLE TO GET TESS!
MUST RENDER THEM UNABLE TO FIGHT BACK—TOO MANY FOR ME IF THEY GET THE CHANCE!
WHA'?
WHO?
I DON'T USUALLY HIT WOMEN, BUT YOU'RE EXCEPTIONS!
ECLIPSE! THANK HEAVENS!!
SOMEBODY PERFORM THE SACRIFICE— I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM!
YOU'LL HAVE TO BE FASTER THAN THAT, LADY-KILLER!
WOOSH


LUCKILY, INSTINCT MADE ME GO NEGATIVE, SO THE KNIFE PASSED THROUGH AFTER A MINOR WOUND!
HUH?
NOW YOU'RE GONNA' GET IT!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SOMEBODY FIND A LIGHT— QUICK!
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE WHILE I CAN!
GET UP—ALL OF YOU! WE CAN STILL TAKE HIM TOGETHER... ANSWER ME!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT, MISS ASTER?
YES, THANKS TO YOU—IF I JUST HAD SOME CLOTHES!
GIVE ME ANOTHER MINUTE!
I'VE NEVER WANTED TO HIT ANYBODY SO BAD!
HOPE... THAT'S ALL OF THEM! LOSING MORE BLOOD THAN I THOUGHT!
AS THE LASER DARKNESS BEGINS TO DISSIPATE—
"I'VE CUT YOUR BONDS, MISS ASTER... NOW I'LL FIND YOU A ROBE!"
I DON'T MEAN TO SOUND UNAPPRECIATIVE, BUT I'D ALMOST RATHER WEAR NOTHING THAN A ROBE OF SUCH... MURDERERS!
THE POLICE WILL ROUND THEM UP—THEY'LL PAY FOR THEIR FUN AND GAMES!
Story & Art by RONN FOSS
Special Thanks to 'GRASS' GREEN, C.CASEY, MARTIN L. GREIM, SHARON CRASE, and ALEX ALMARAZ
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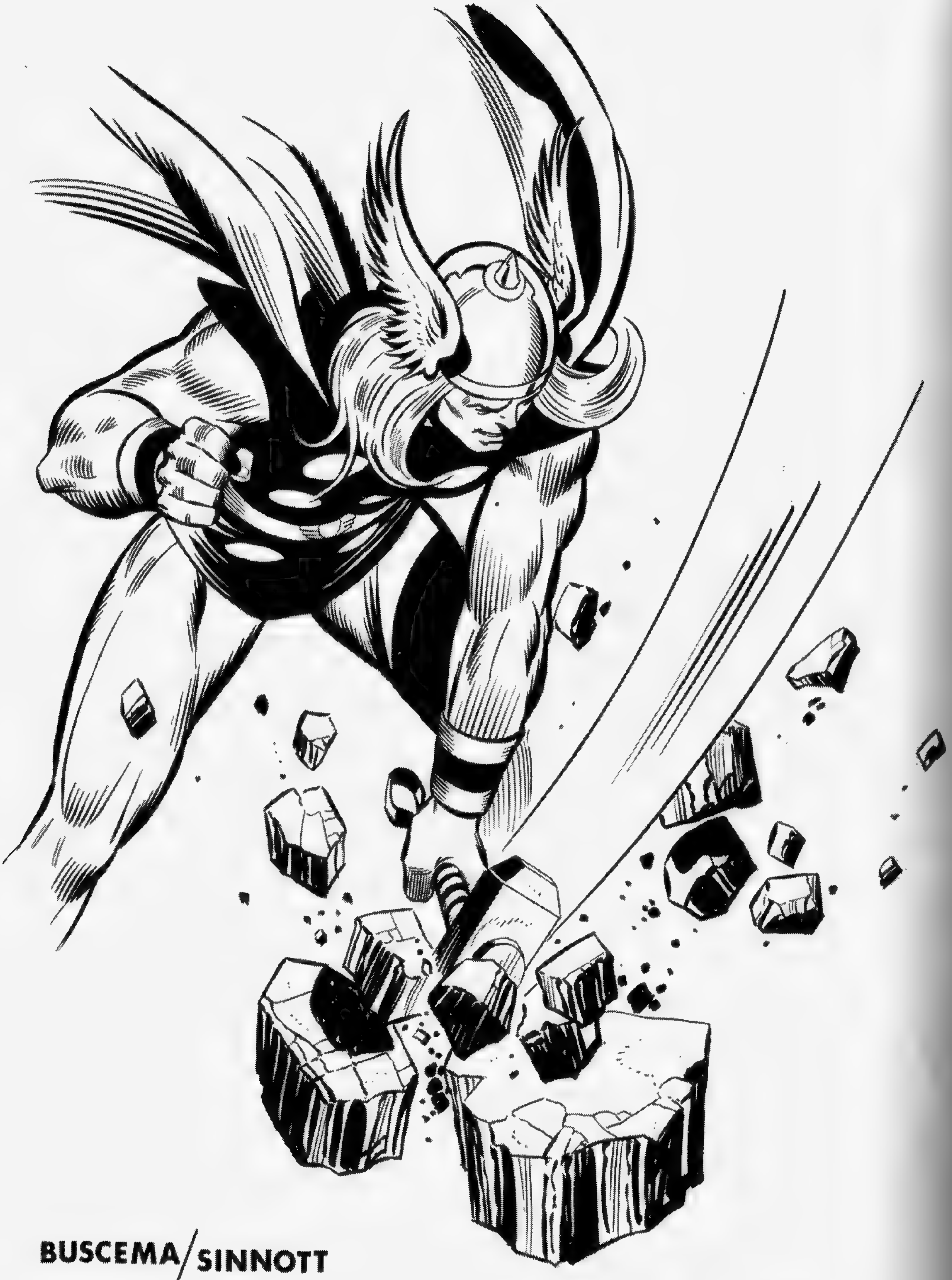

BUSCEMA/SINNOTT

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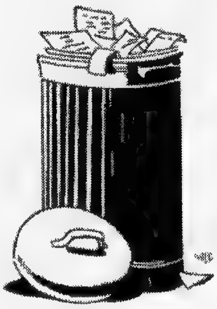


From the Circular File

Alright fans! Here's your chance to boost or knock COMIC CRUSADER. Each issue, I'll print the most intelligent letters I receive.

About ads - This is not an ad zine. Any ad you see here, has my personal recomendation. If you wish to place an ad, send me a copy of your zine and I'll send you the ad rates and the size your ad must be.

Send All Correspondence To:

MARTIN L. GREIM
BOX 132
DEDHAM, MASS.
02026.

LAWRENCE SEVERS
5712 Fleet Road
Hampstead 254, Quebec
Montreal, Canada.

As I opened the envelope and pulled it out, I noticed something different about Comic Crusader. It was wrap-around! I know this issue (#10) cost 10¢ more, but I was surprised to see the changes you made with the extra money. I like CC wraparound, but wouldn't mind seeing an issue of the old CC here and there. Well, that's that! I guess one surprise wasn't enough to spring on us readers, eh? I'm talking about your thinking of discontinuing your Con reports. I'm definitely against it! I can remember when I received your last Con issue, just a little while after I entered fandom. It was terriffic, informative and well done. In fact, maybe even better than #10's report.

Issue #10 was great. Well written, layed out fine, etc. The only thing I didn't like was a piece of art by Ronn Sutton, who didn't put as much detail into this pic as there were in others. Comic Chatter was missed and I hope you bring it back. Anymore news on the CC - Champion Special? Steranko's History of Comics book review was well written, but I think the topic has been reviewed too much and that you should have reviewed something else. The photos were great and after looking at them I said to myself, "So that's what he looks like". I wonder how many other fans did the same thing? Please don't drop the convention issues. OK? It took me four issues of CC to write you. I'll try and do it sooner next time.

BECAUSE ISSUE #11 WAS SO FULL OF MATERIAL, I HAD NO ROOM FOR A LETTER COLUMN. I'M STARTING THIS ISSUE'S COLUMN OFF WITH LETTERS ON ISSUE #10.
WELL, LAWRENCE, I'M PLEASED YOU LIKED "CRUSADER'S" NEW LOOK. IT'S HERE TO STAY. SORRY, BUT I'LL BE DOING NO MORE CONVENTION ISSUES. HOWEVER, I THINK YOU'LL LIKE WHAT I HAVE IN STORE FOR YOU IN FUTURE ISSUES. THE COMIC CRUSADER - CHAMPION SPECIAL IS DEAD! I HOPE YOU DO WRITE SOONER THAN 4 ISSUES! MANY READERS WRITE AND TELL ME THEY LOVED OR HATED AND ISSUE, BUT THEY DON'T ELABORATE. PLEASE FANS WRITE!!!

GARY BROWN
5430 West 6th Court
Hialeah, Fla. 33012

In total, the package of Comic Crusader #10 was quite impressive. I like the wrap-around look and hope you can keep it. Your cover was quite good. The all-black "space" as a background comes off real nice. Bill Black said that once you develop your own personal inking style, you're gonna' be one heck of an artist. It appears as if you've started developing this "style" -- the cover shows it! I like it.

Your Con report was very percise and all-covering. If I had to suggest any type of change, it would be to include pictures of the Con activities in the individual articles, rather than leaving the majority of them for one or two pages. More like you worked the layouts for the Warren Awards page.

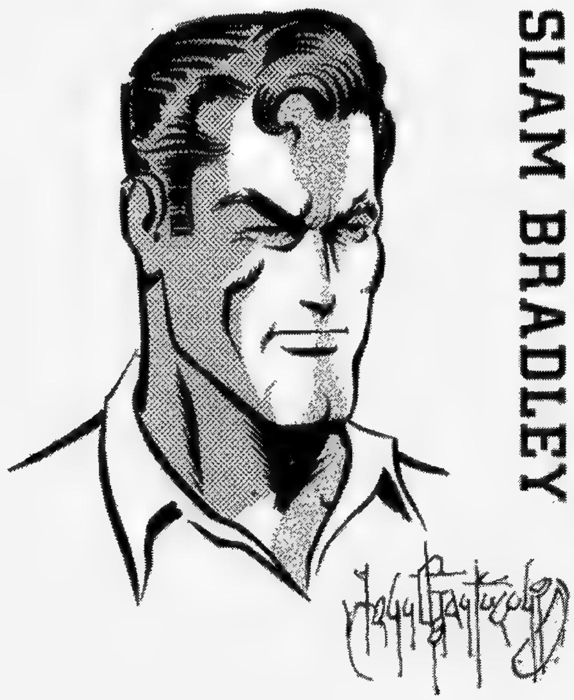
Two columns are nice, especially when using small print as you have. What whould make it even nicer would be to have the type evened up in each column or seemingly so. I know it does involve that extra bit of work, but it can be kind of 'neater.' I know in Gremlin #2 I tried it in parts of the Adams story and it worked nicely. I should have used it more and I will on #3. Maybe I'm getting nitpicky because you've put together such a complete package.

The one item I don't see eye to eye with you on was your dual review (with Bob Cosgrove) of Steranko's History of Comics. I don't think it is the most important historical contribution to the history of the comic book industry. Really (and don't laugh), I think that Feiffer's book did more for the industry than Steranko's book. That may change in the coming years, but if you really want to get down to the nittygritty, it meant more than Jim's work.

This doesn't mean I didn't like Steranko's book, nor does it mean that I think it bad...but (and the argument begins), the Feiffer book just seems historically (to which you were referring to) more of a plus to the industry.

Anyway, I did think the book was excellent and go right down the line with the majority of your opinions. It probably could have been done better, but heck, if someone thinks they could do Jim one better, I suggest they start writing and find themselves a publisher!

And after writing those last few paragraphs, I start to feel nitpicky again. Next issue, why don't you misspell some words or call Al Williamson a hack artist, so I can really get on you. Comic Crusader #10 was really a fine, fine job Marty and I hope you have as much success with future issues.



GEE! BILL BLACK THINKS I MAY HAVE A CHANCE OF BECOMING "ONE HECK OF AN ARTIST"! IN MOMENTS OF DESPAIR, THOSE WORDS WILL GIVE ME THE COURAGE TO GO ON. BY THE WAY, A LOT OF FANS THOUGHT I SWIPED THAT COVER. I DIDN'T! I THOUGHT OF USING EVEN MARGINS, AT ONE TIME, BUT DISCARDED THE IDEA. I'D HAVE TO PUT TOO MUCH EXTRA TIME INTO DOING IT; PLUS THE FACT I DON'T WANT TO LOSE THE FAN FLAVOR OF "CRUSADER". YOU THINK FEIFFER'S BOOK IS A MORE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE INDUSTRY THAN STERANKO'S!!! FEIFFER'S BOOK WAS MORE ON THE IDEA OF PERSONAL MEMORIES. HISTORY OF THE COMICS IS JUST WHAT THE NAME IMPLIES...A HISTORY OF COMICS! THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY EVER WRITTEN!

FLASH GORDON

ISSUE #11 BROUGHT IN MORE MAIL THAN I'VE HAD ON ANY ONE ISSUE! JUST ABOUT EVERYONE RAVED OVER IT. IN FACT, ALL BUT 4 DID. THE SECOND PRINTED LETTER IS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RAVES. THE FIRST IS THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN.

JIM STEWART
5502 Fenwood Ave.
Oxon Hill, Md. 20021

I might as well take this time to comment on Comic Crusader #11. The Williamson cover, with the Crusader logo looked fine. But it just about ruined the drawing to put "No. 11" down in the corner. It interfered with the composition.

I'll tell you now, that I didn't read the ish. I'm planning, sometime in the future, to see the 2 Flash Gordon serials that I haven't seen as of yet. Reading Mike's summaries would ruin the experience for me, because I'd be comparing Mike's interpretations with the real thing.

Artwise, the book was a treasure trove of artwork. Some really fine stuff, and I enjoyed a lot of it. However, you should've printed the 2 Gray Morrow girls on 2 seperate pages, instead of splitting the page between them. Another gripe, on all the pictures from the serials, you put little numbers, then captions corresponding. Why didn't you just lay out the pictures, and put the captions under them? Seeing a "3" or a "5" or some other number, ruins the photo.

Your strip was pretty good, but who did the lettering? You never letter by hand. You've always used a typewriter. Who lettered the strip? That feature "Flash Gordon's Friends" wasn't too exciting. You'd have been better off with a statistical article on Flash, or for that matter, a comprehensive article on Flash by an authority like Al Williamson. In Tony Isabella's article, you misspelled "roobs". It's spelled rubes. Too bad you couldn't get color on Al Williamson's cover. That would've been really beautiful. Say, Al didn't do the zip-a-toning himself did he? Well that's about it. Over all, an enjoyable issue. Can't wait for the issue with the Defender!

THE NUMBER 11 ON THE COVER RUINED THE DRAWING? NO WAY! IF ANYTHING IT BALANCED IT! YOU DIDN'T READ THE ISSUE?! HOW ARE YOU ABLE TO COMMENT ON IT? MIKE ROYER DIDN'T INTERPRET, HE GAVE A BLOW BY BLOW DESCRIPTION! SPACE LIMITATIONS WOULD NOT PERMIT PRINTING THE 2 MORROW GIRLS SEPERATELY. THE SMALL NUMBERS, ON THE PHOTOS, WERE USED FOR QUICK READER IDENTIFICATION. JUST BECAUSE I DON'T OFTEN HAND LETTER, DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T! I DID THE LETTERING. SINCE THE FIRST PART OF THE ISSUE WAS STATISTICAL, (the part you didn't read) "FRIENDS OF FLASH GORDON WAS USED AS A RELIEF. IT MAKES FOR A BALANCED ISSUE. I KNOW TONY SPELLED RUBE WRONG. ABOUT 75% OF THE LETTERS POINTED THAT OUT. YOU CAN'T WIN THEM ALL. AL WILLIAMSON ZIP-A-TONED HIS DRAWING AND COLOR WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO EXPENSIVE! IF I USED COLOR, ON THIS ISSUE, I WOULD HAVE LOST MONEY! I WON'T PRINT AN ISSUE THAT WILL LOSE MONEY! ISSUE #13 WILL HAVE THE DEFENDER!

RICHARD BELTMAN
No address given
New York, N.Y. 11224

Received Comic Crusader in the mail today and spent my whole evening reading it. When you said you were going to put out a Flash Gordon issue, you weren't fooling around! This issue will most certainly become a collector's item! The low price is the thing that pleases me most. Heritage is putting out a $5.00 book on Flash Gordon and they certainly have a lot of pros doing work for it. The thing is, it costs too much. The average fan can't lay down $5.00 even for a hundred page book. I'm certain too, their article on the Flash Gordon films will never touch Comic Crusader #11's. It just couldn't. Mike, Bob and you covered it completely. Anything they do will be a mere repeat of Comic Crusader. They have a lot of pros, but then, so do you and for only 50¢ too. Now I'd like to go into the issue a bit. There were flaws! Some misspelled words here and there, (the most obvious being Tony Isabella's spelling of rube) but that's only a minor flaw. The fact you had to turn many pages sideways was your biggest flaw.

The art in this issue was the best in any fanzine I've seen for a long time. Lot of my friends say Fantastic Fanzine is the best around, but they changed their minds when they saw your zine. You pay a lot of money for a color cover on F.F. and get average fan material and one good interview inside. No thanks. I'll take C.C.'s well done articles any day! (Didn't much care for your art in F.F. #13, Marty.) Back to C.C. #11. Your strip was fantastic! You managed to capture the Raymond flavor and yet put something of yourself into it. A fine, well done job. When are you going pro?

I learned much in reading the issue. Mike Royer's comparison of the movies to the strip were most interesting. Those little bits about dubbed in voices and changes in continued chapters, plus Mike's side comments, make an article that should get an award. A wealth of information in this issue. I have a question. You said the ending of the 3rd serial would have allowed for a 4th. Why was one never made? I've talked enough. I'd just like to thank you for another fine, informative issue.

I KNOW HERITAGE WON'T BE ABLE TO TOUCH MY FILM ARTICLE, BUT I BELIEVE THEY'RE DOING OTHER THINGS BESIDES THE FILMS. FANTASTIC FANZINE IS A WELL PACKAGED PRODUCT. NOT ALWAYS THE BEST WRITTEN, BUT STILL WORTH THE MONEY! I'M NOT GOING PRO. I LIKE MY PRESENT JOB. SERIALS WERE ON THEIR WAY OUT, WHEN THE 3rd FLASH GORDON ONE WAS MADE. I GUESS THEY JUST DIDN'T WANT TO PUT ANYMORE CASH INTO A DYING ITEM. IT'S ONLY A GUESS ON MY PART THOUGH. SPACE LIMITATIONS CAUSED ME TO HAVE SOME PAGES PRINTED SO YOU'D HAVE TO TURN THE BOOK SIDEWAYS. PLEASE FANS, ENCLOSE YOUR FULL ADDRESS WHEN YOU WRITE!!!!!

COMING NEXT ISSUE! COMIC CRUSADER 13

For some people the number 13 means bad luck! But not for readers of COMIC CRUSADER No. 13! Next issue will feature the long awaited DEFENDER strip. Nineteen pages of fast action, such as the kind depicted at the right! This is a story you won't soon forget. It concludes the one begun in issue #8 and answers many questions about The Defender and The Ruler. Don't miss it!!! Art by MLG. Also in this issue, Comic Crusader is proud to present a brand new MR. A story by STEVE DITKO!!! This unique story will be the highlight of issue 13 and I'm sure you won't want to miss it! All this, and the top art and articles you've come to expect in Comic Crusader too! Just 50¢!!!

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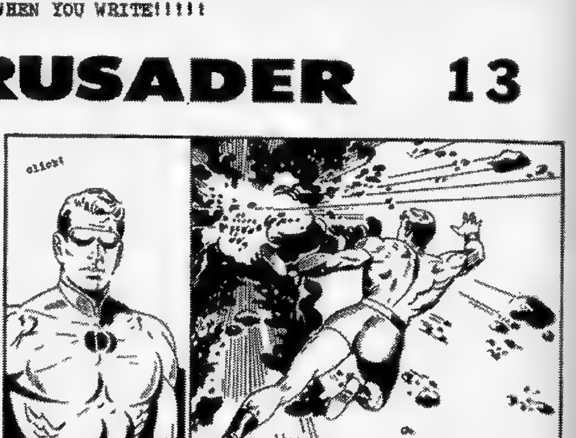
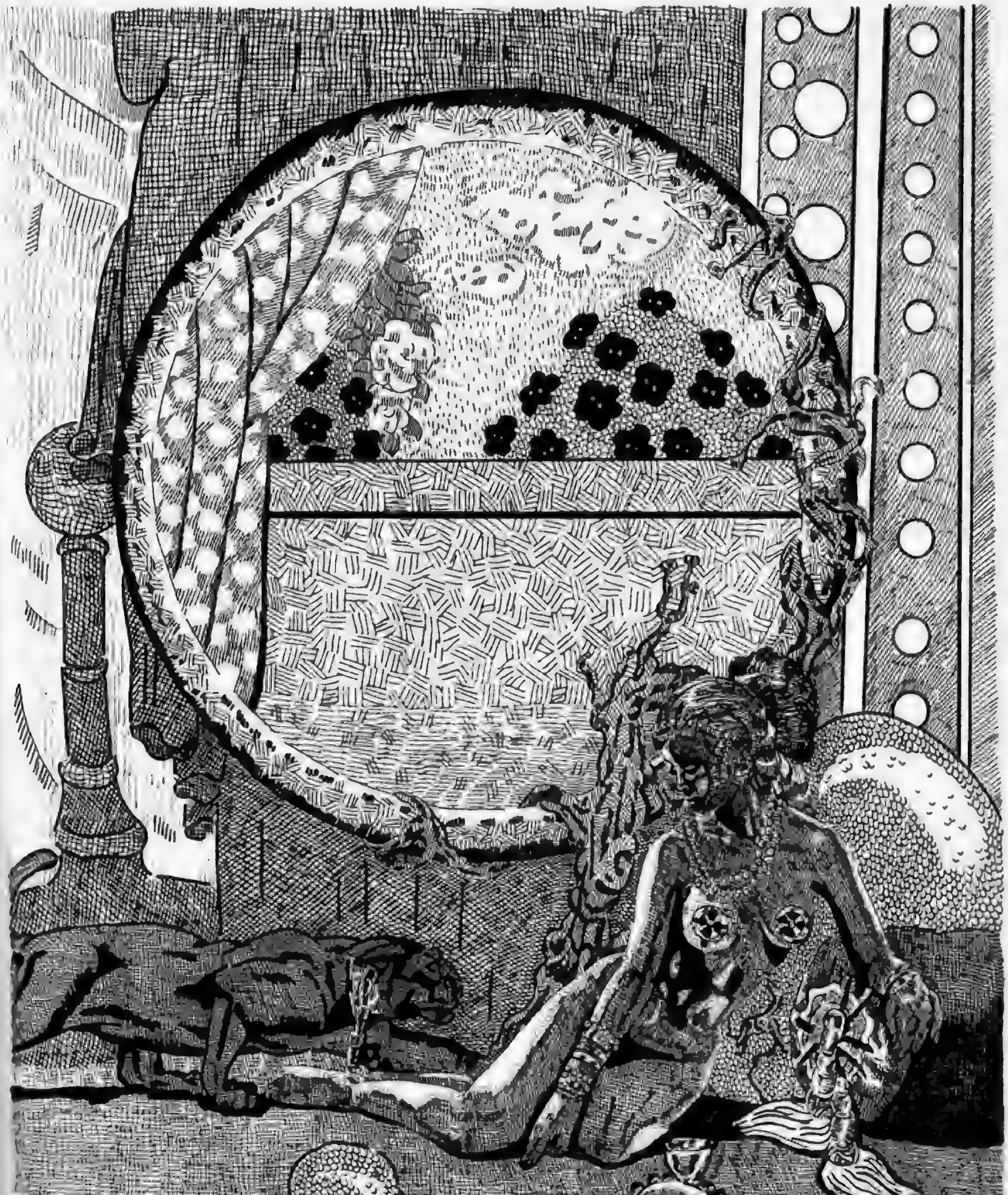
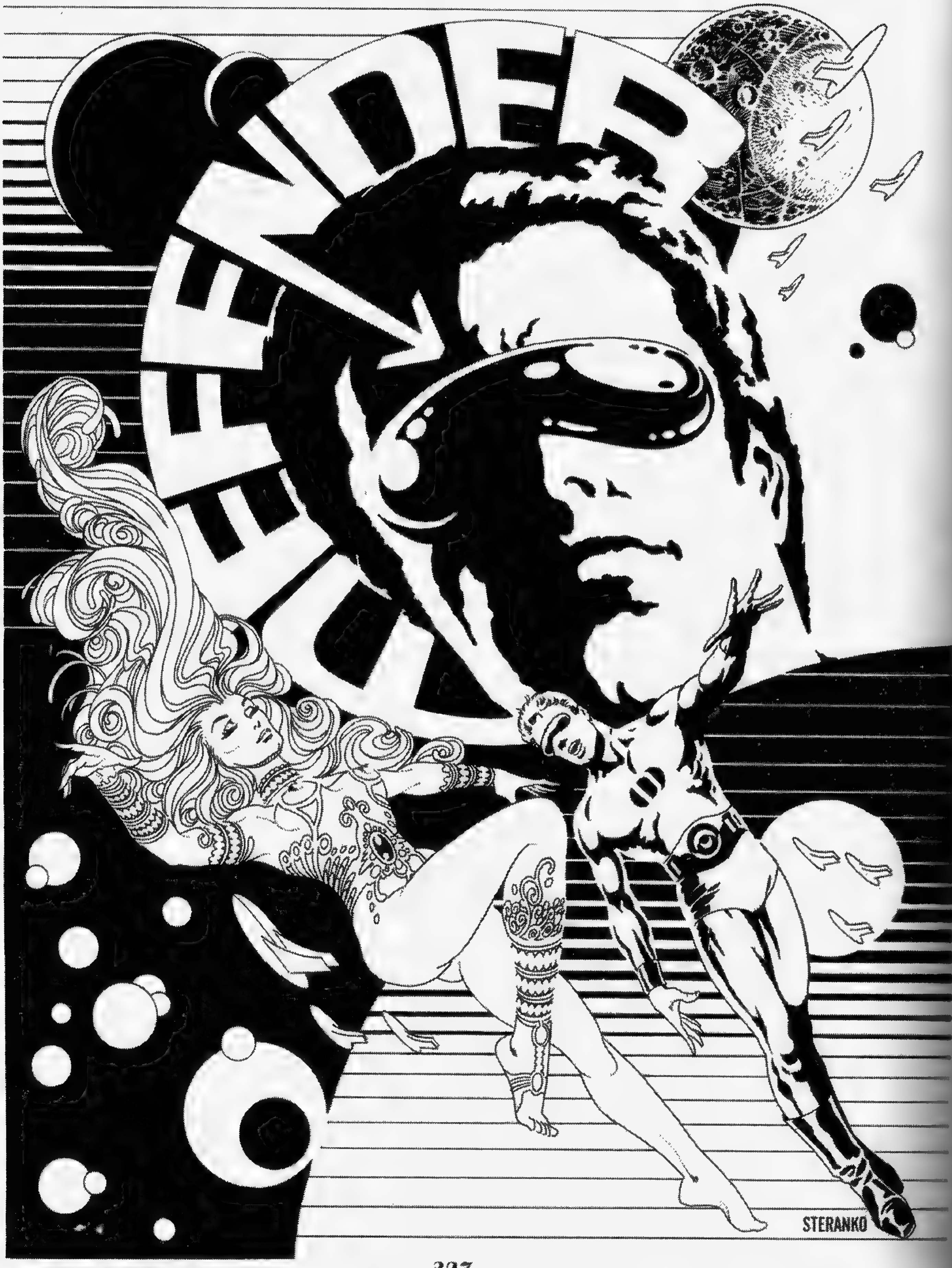

click!
The Defender leaps, just in time! Then he turns and attacks.

COMIC CRUSADER - 12 .... 50c




DEFENDER
STERANKO

CRUSADER COMMENTS

The dynamic figure you see below is a re-inked drawing of THE DEFENDER from the cover of COMIC CRUSADER #5. It heralds the fantastic concluding chapter of the Defender saga, "Terror At The Top Of The World!" Now some of you will spot a few swipes in this story. Please don't waste your time writing me nasty letters about them. Instead, enjoy the story and the way I utilized them.

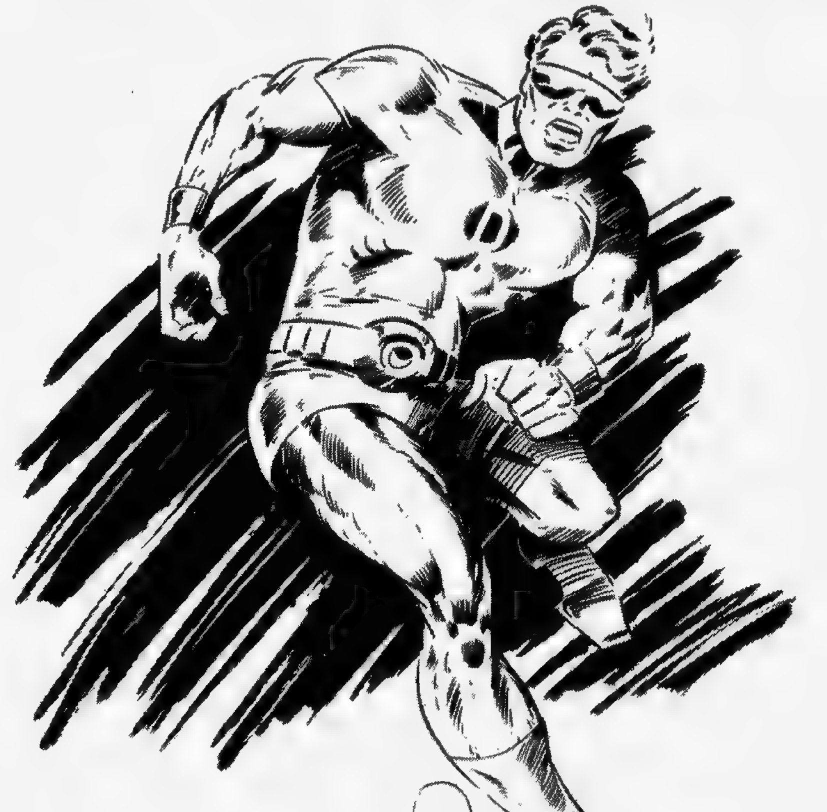
This issue's second blockbusting strip is by STEVE DITKO. Steve originally did it for a school newspaper. When plans for its printing fell through, Steve asked if I might like to publish it. Since I believe Mr. A to be one of the most thought provoking characters around today, I jumped at the chance. I hope you enjoy it and I thank Steve for alowing me to print it!

In an era when more and more fanzines sport fantastic covers, there is none more fantastic than the one JIM STERANKO has rendered for this issue! Thanks Jim!

It takes an unusual man to write an unusual article. A "13" article for a "13th" issue is such an article and such a man is TOM FAGAN! I'm sure you'll enjoy his article on 13 oriented comic characters.

This issue, a 75¢ price goes into effect. Higher printing costs and an increase of 3rd class postal rates force this price change. I hope you'll continue to support this top zine for under $1.00!

My thanks to Gil Kane, Bill Black, Wayne Pond, Anthony Kowalik, Joe Staton and Ron Fortier for their help in putting this issue together. Read and enjoy, my friends. More is on the way! Best - MARTIN L. GREIM



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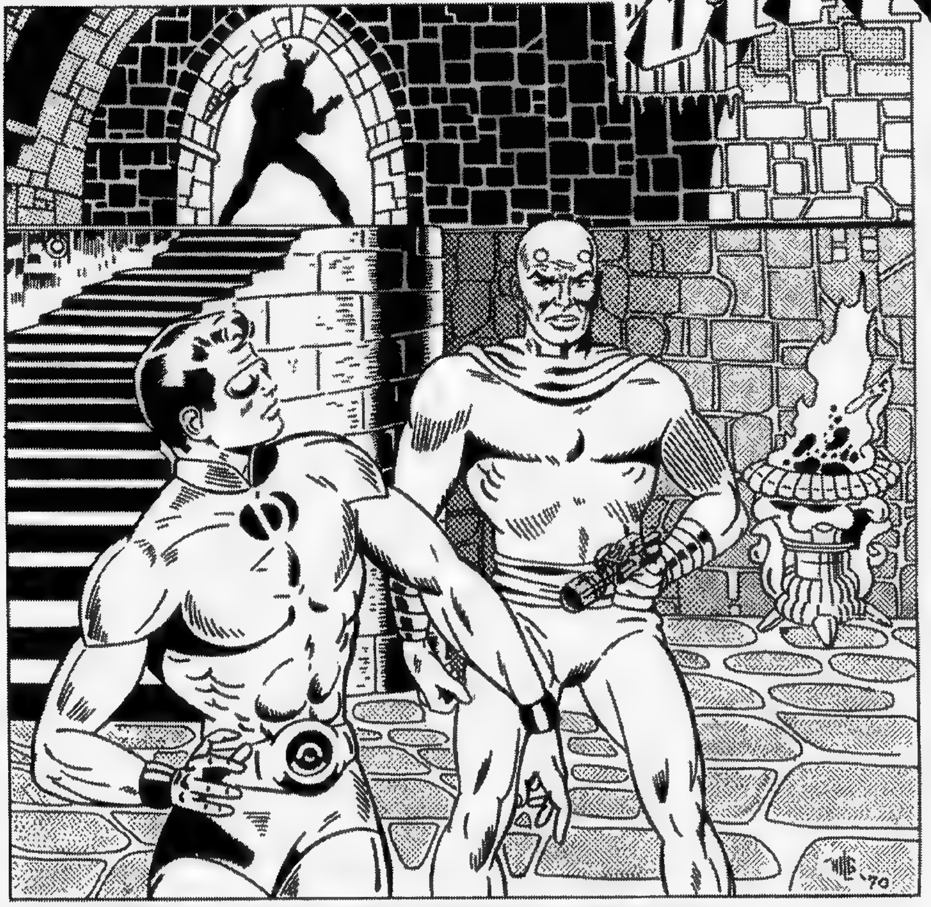
Martin Greim
Presents....

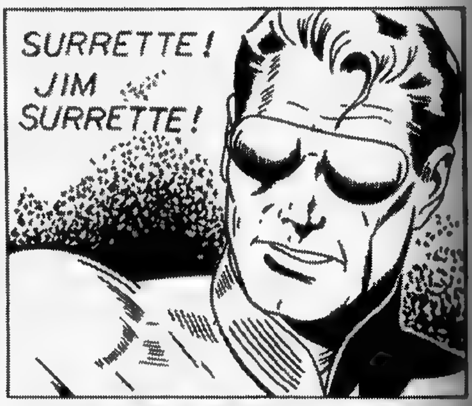
DAVID MANNING The DEFENDER

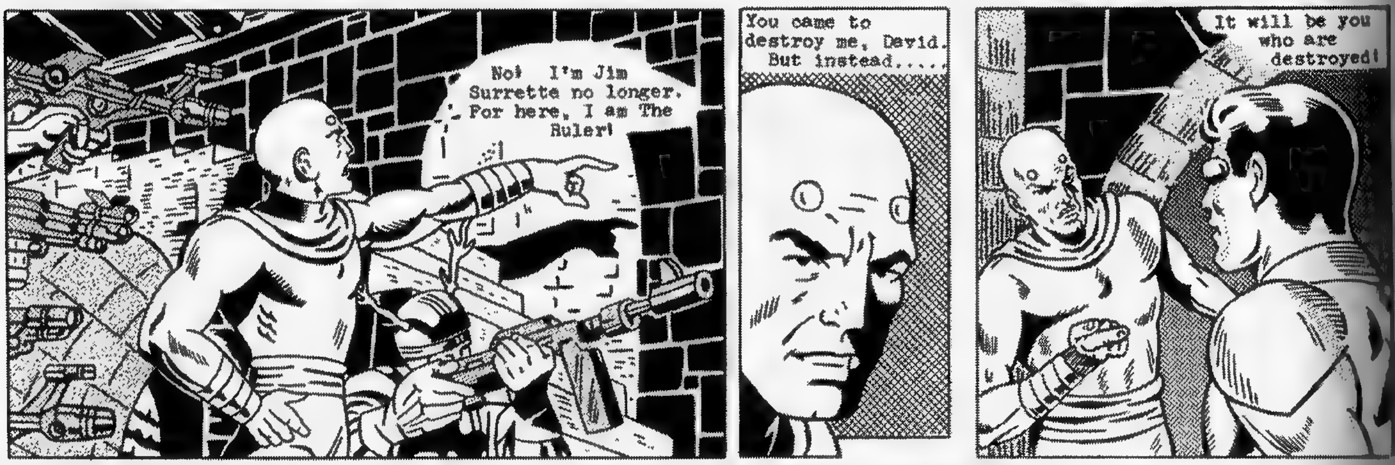


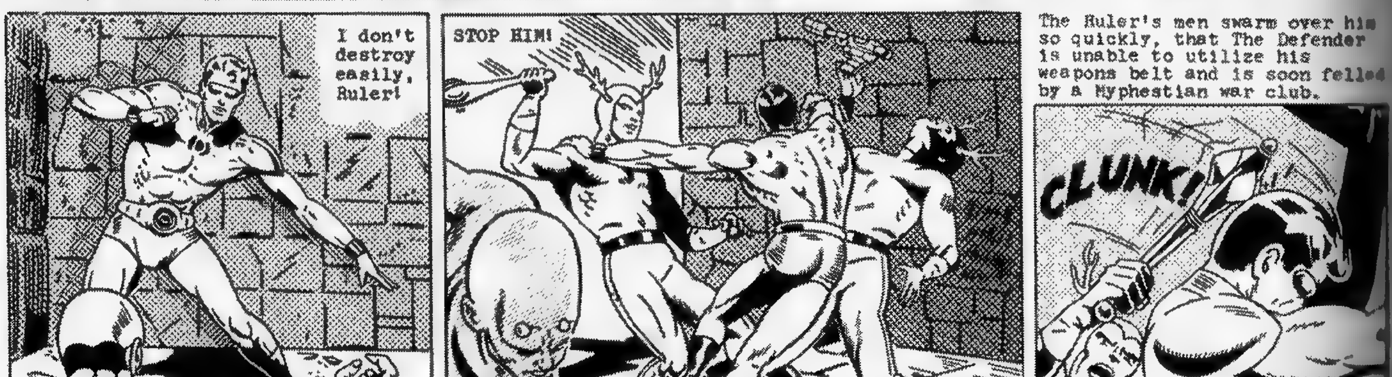
Legend

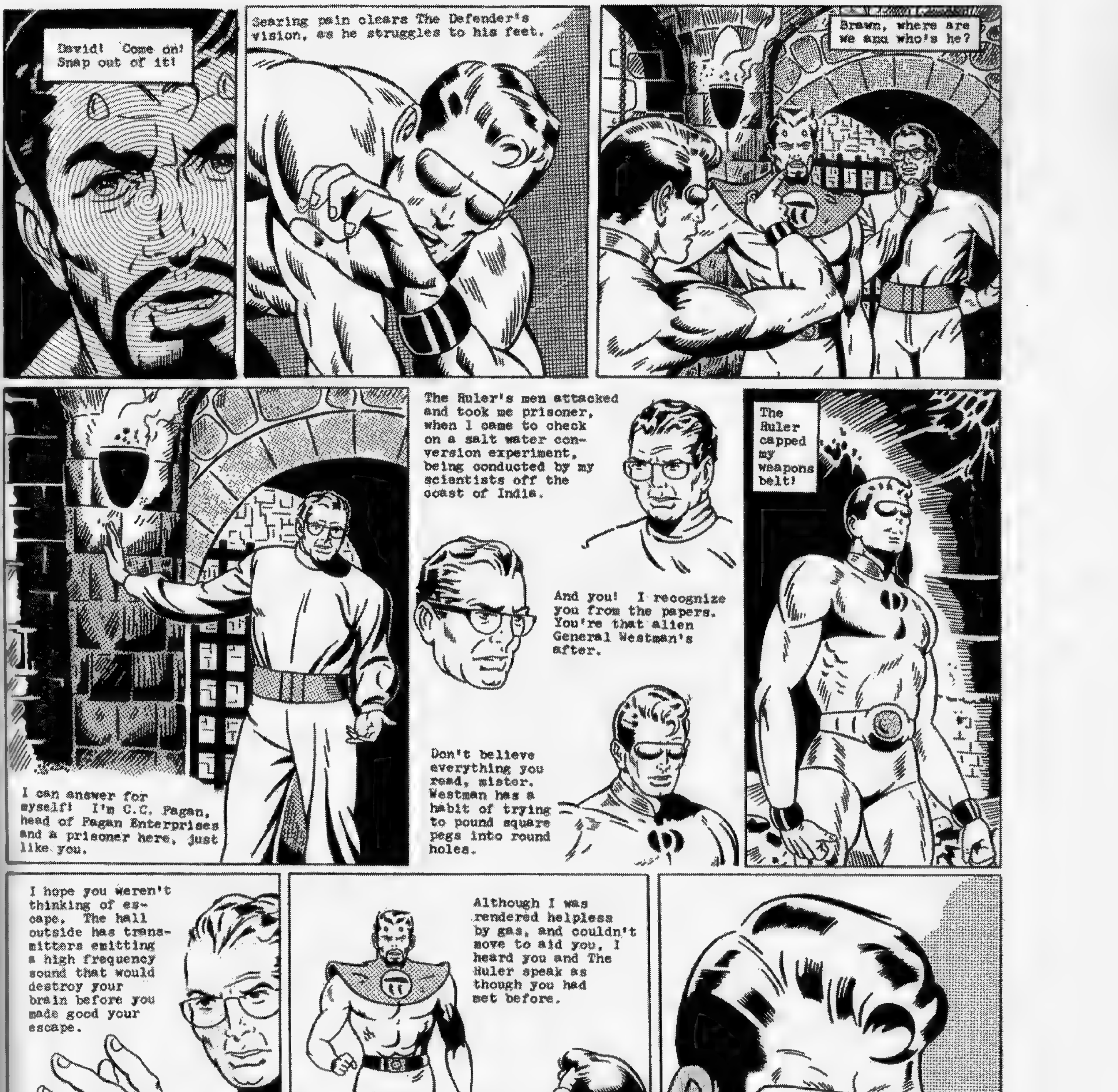
The Defender learns from Brawn and Queen Jolene that The Ruler is coming to Earth to personally mastermind its conquest!

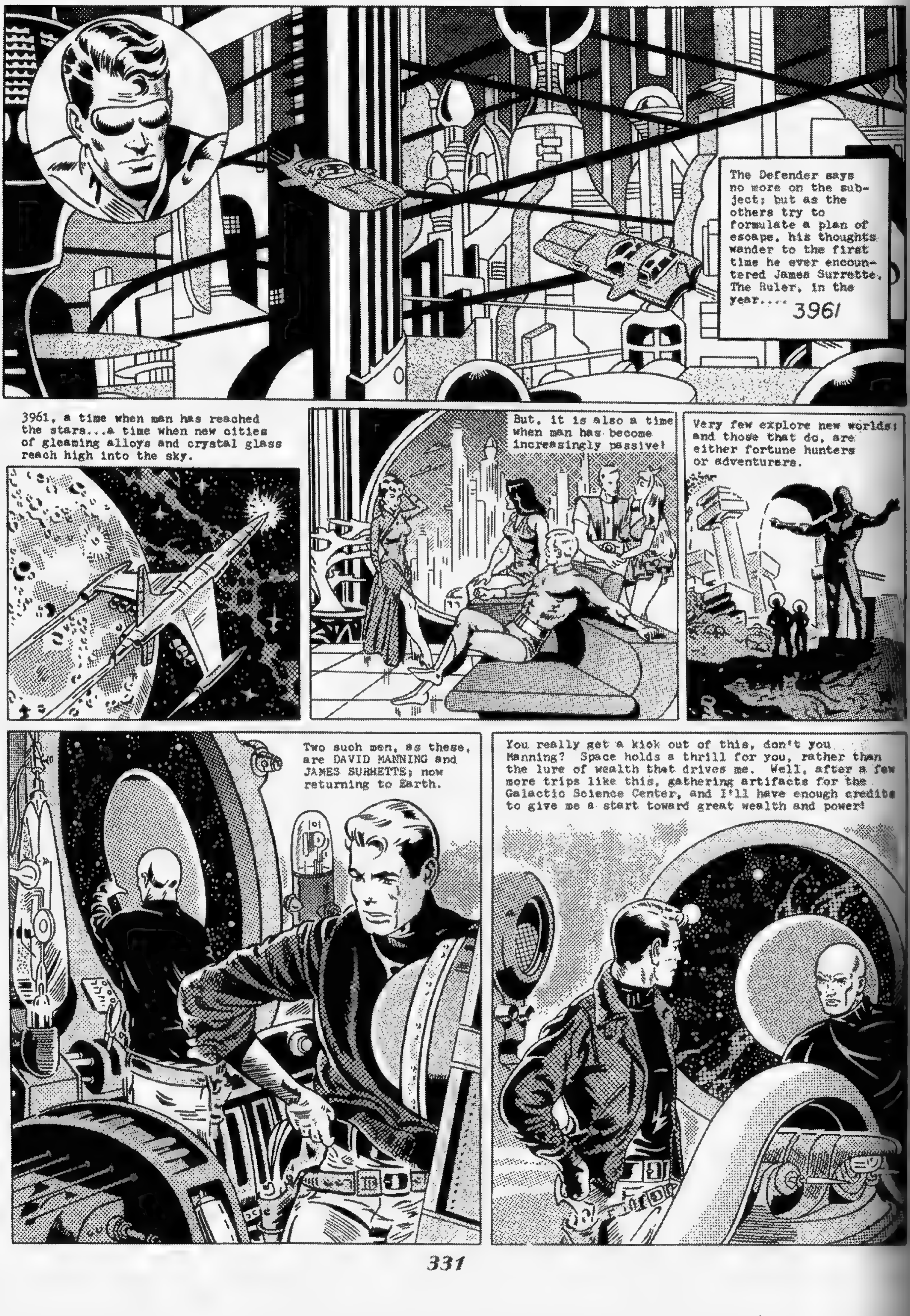
Using his teleporter, The Defender transports himself and Brawn to The Ruler's Himalayan headquarters. They split up, in an attempt to gain entry and after a small battle, The Defender succeeds. Suddenly, he is surprised by The Ruler, who is holding a gun over Brawn's unconscious form. The Ruler moves in, as his troops arrive!


SURRETTE! JIM SURRETTE!

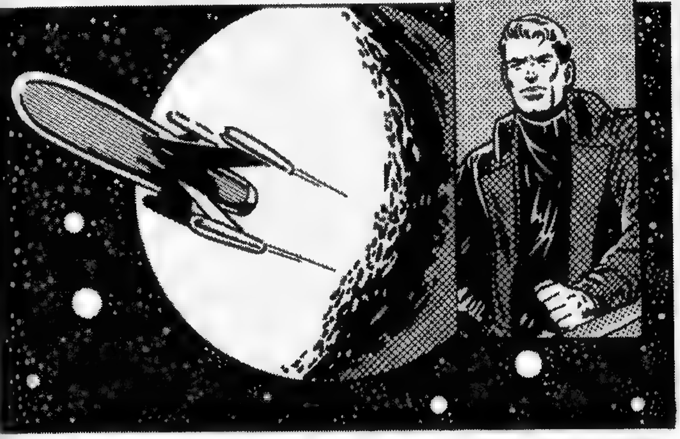

No! I'm Jim Surrette no longer. For here, I am The Ruler!
You came to destroy me, David. But instead....
It will be you who are destroyed!

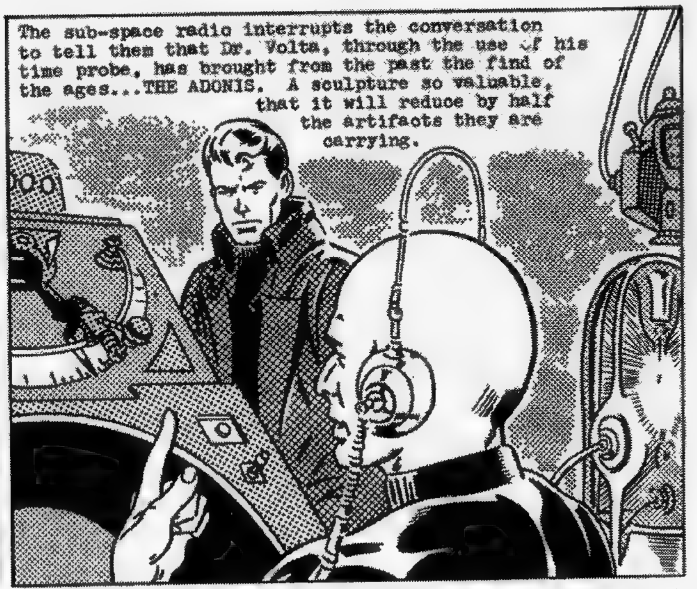

I don't destroy easily, Ruler!
STOP HIM!
The Ruler's men swarm over him so quickly, that The Defender is unable to utilize his weapons belt and is soon felled by a Myphestian war club.
CLUNK!


David! Come on! Snap out of it!
Searing pain clears The Defender's vision, as he struggles to his feet.
Brawn, where are we and who's he?
I can answer for myself! I'm C.C. Pagan, head of Pagan Enterprises and a prisoner here, just like you.
The Ruler's men attacked and took me prisoner, when I came to check on a salt water conversion experiment, being conducted by my scientists off the coast of India.
And you! I recognize you from the papers. You're that alien General Westman's after.
Don't believe everything you read, mister. Westman has a habit of trying to pound square pegs into round holes.
The Ruler capped my weapons belt!
I hope you weren't thinking of escape. The hall outside has transmitters emitting a high frequency sound that would destroy your brain before you made good your escape.
Although I was rendered helpless by gas, and couldn't move to aid you, I heard you and The Ruler speak as though you had met before.
Yes, The Ruler and I are acquainted!


The Defender says no more on the subject; but as the others try to formulate a plan of escape, his thoughts wander to the first time he ever encountered James Surrette, The Ruler, in the year.... 3961
3961, a time when man has reached the stars...a time when new cities of gleaming alloys and crystal glass reach high into the sky.
But, it is also a time when man has become increasingly passive!
Very few explore new worlds; and those that do, are either fortune hunters or adventurers.
Two such men, as these, are DAVID MANNING and JAMES SURRETTE; now returning to Earth.
You really get a kick out of this, don't you Manning? Space holds a thrill for you, rather than the lure of wealth that drives me. Well, after a few more trips like this, gathering artifacts for the Galactic Science Center, and I'll have enough credits to give me a start toward great wealth and power!

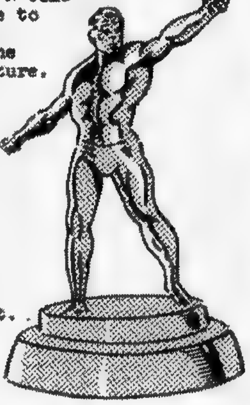
Is that right! Well, I'll tell you: I like money as well as the next guy, but in a world where every member of a family is tranquilized into bland normality, where "hate" and "fight" are the dirtiest words in the language, and where computors run everything, right down to programming sex periods....space is the only answer!

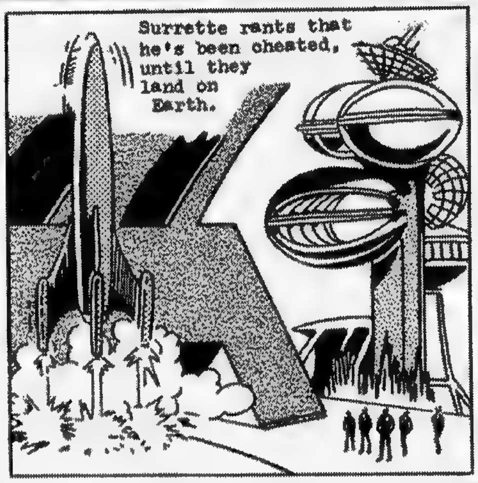


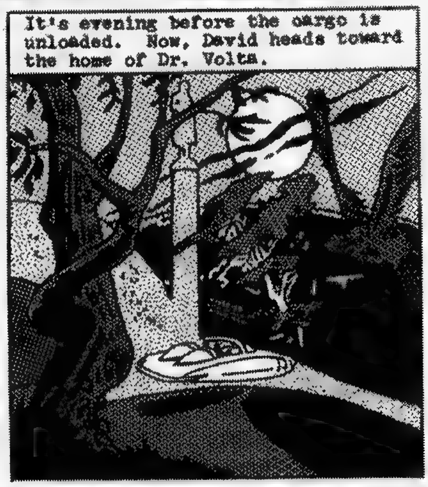

The sub-space radio interrupts the conversation to tell them that Dr. Volta, through the use of his time probe, has brought from the past the find of the ages...THE ADONIS. A sculpture so valuable, that it will reduce by half the artifacts they are carrying.

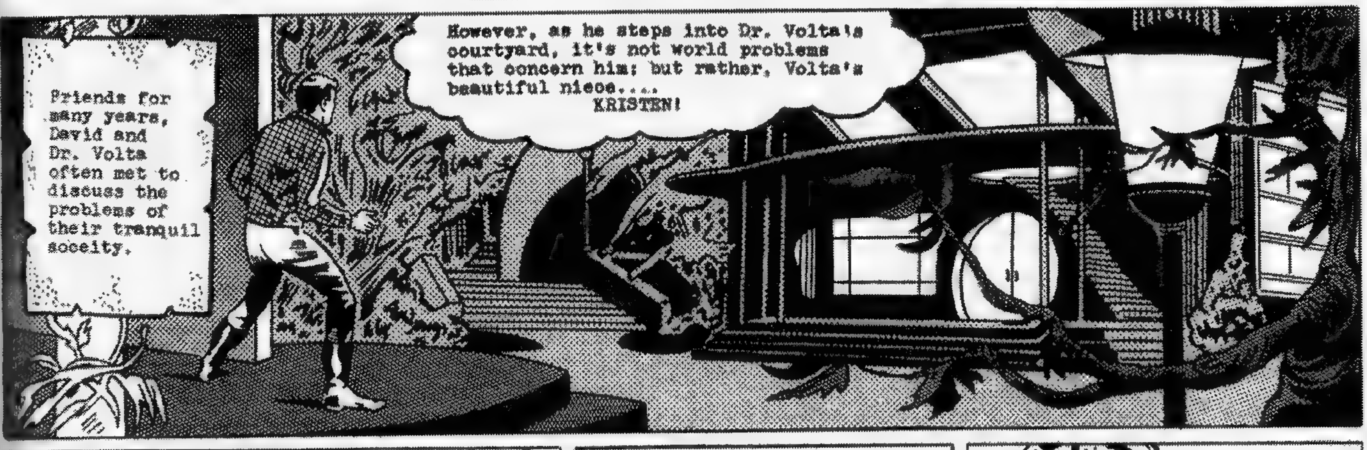
Scientists in the year 3961, through use of a time probe, are able to bring lost art treasures of the past to the future. There, they reproduce the object and the original is sent back to the exact second in time from which it was taken. In this way, the people of that era never miss the object.

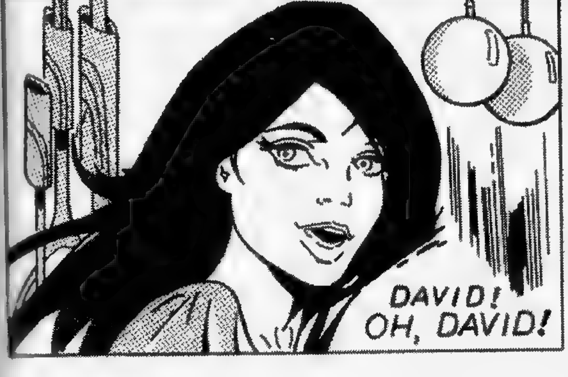
Just such an object is THE ADONIS!

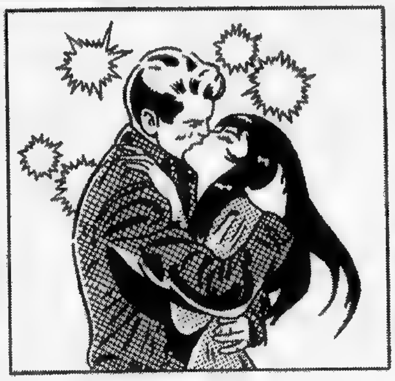


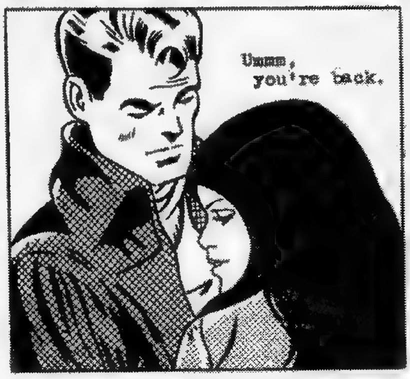

Surrette rants that he's been cheated, until they land on Earth.

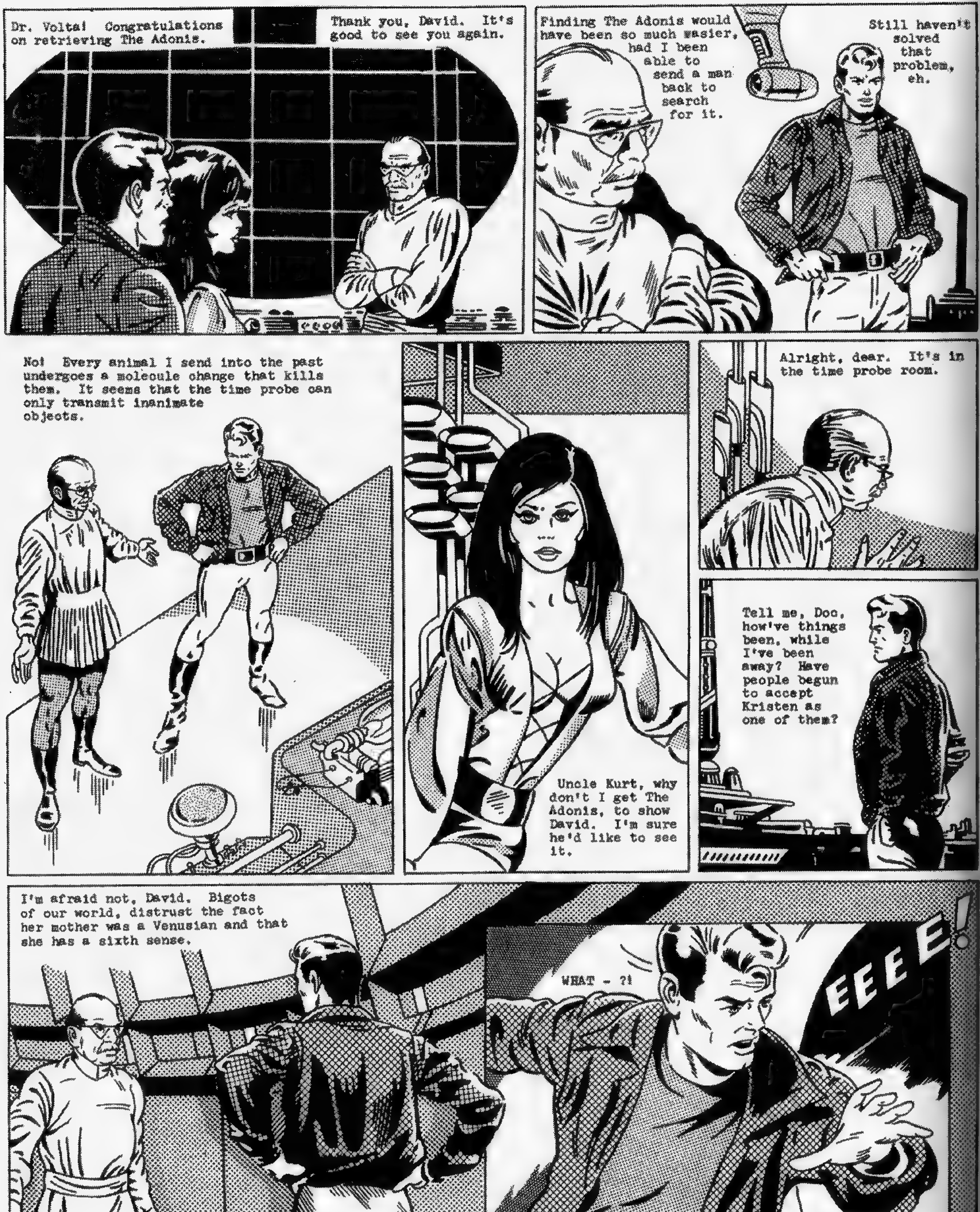

It's evening before the cargo is unloaded. Now, David heads toward the home of Dr. Volta.

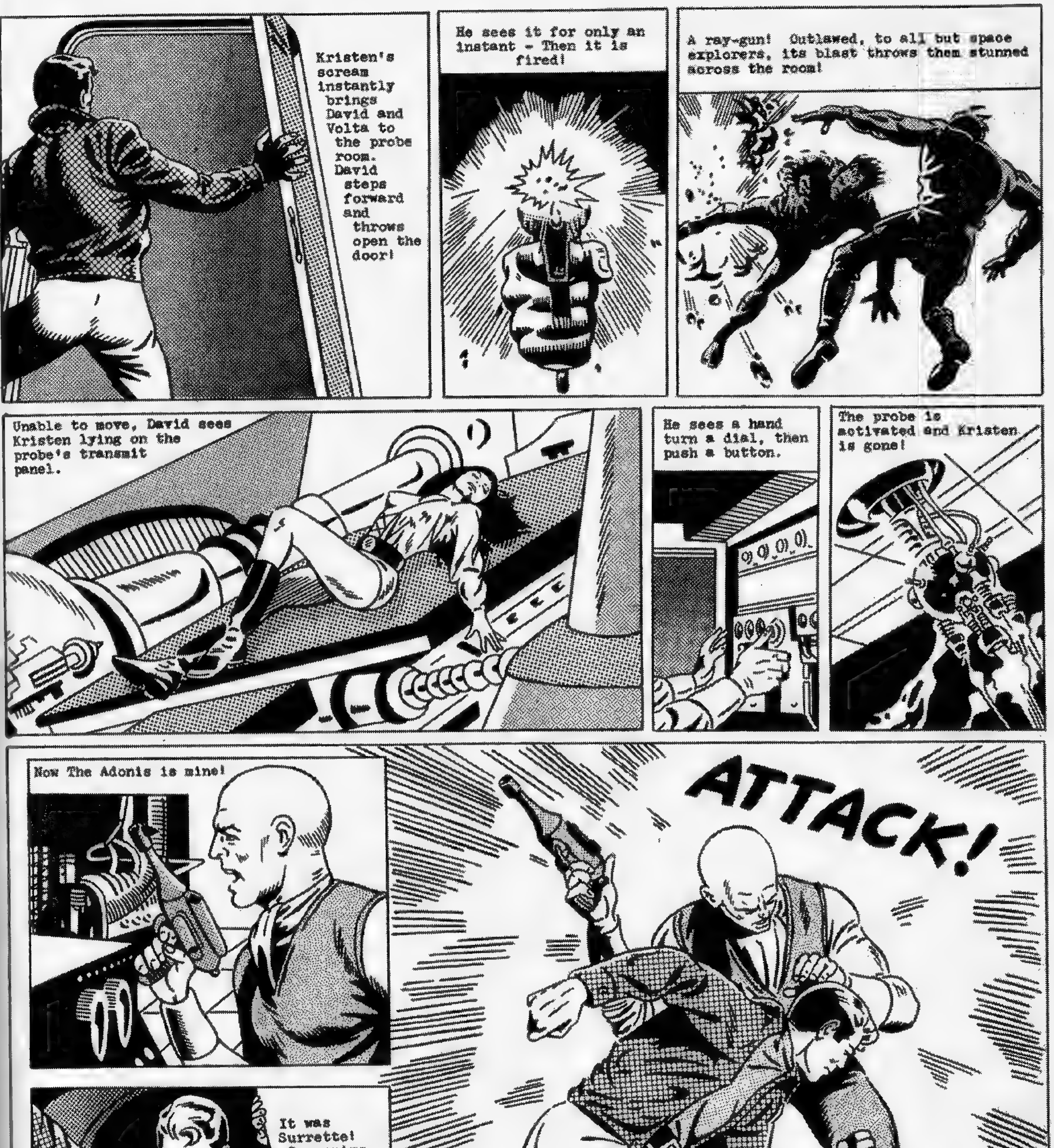

Friends for many years, David and Dr. Volta often met to discuss the problems of their tranquil soceity.
However, as he steps into Dr. Volta's courtyard, it's not world problems that concern him: but rather, Volta's beautiful niece.... KRISTEN!

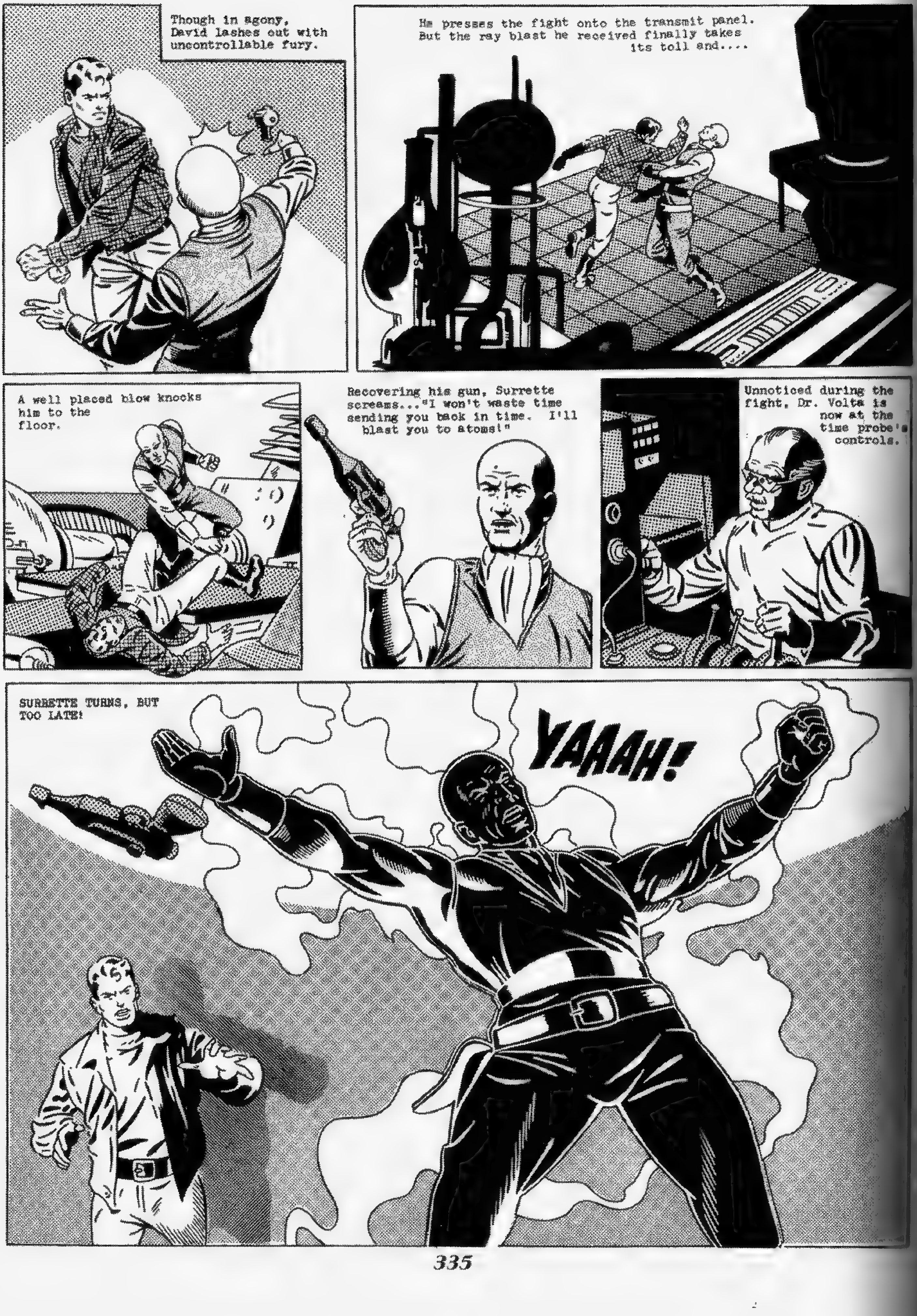

DAVID! OH, DAVID!

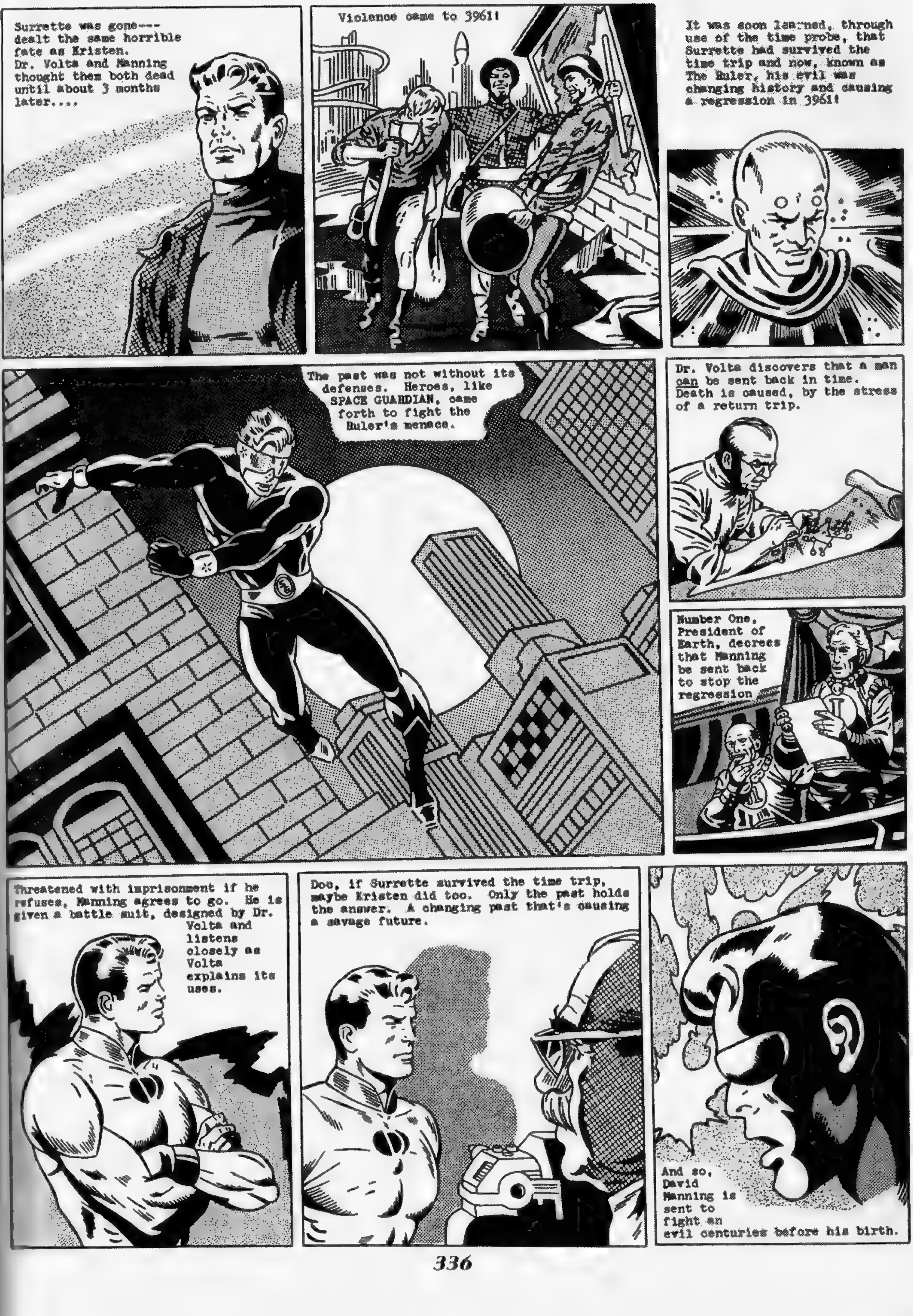


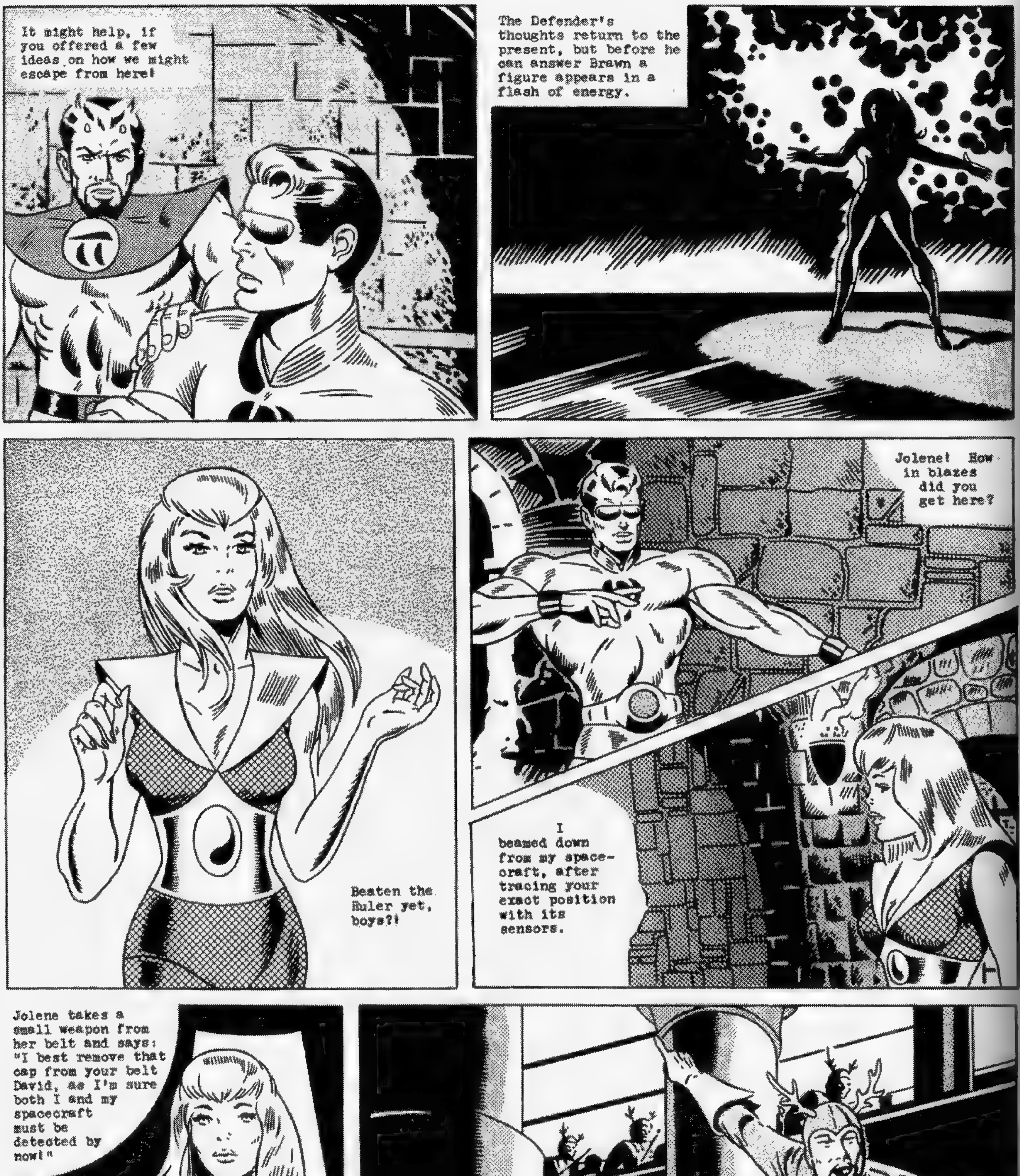

Ummm, you're back.

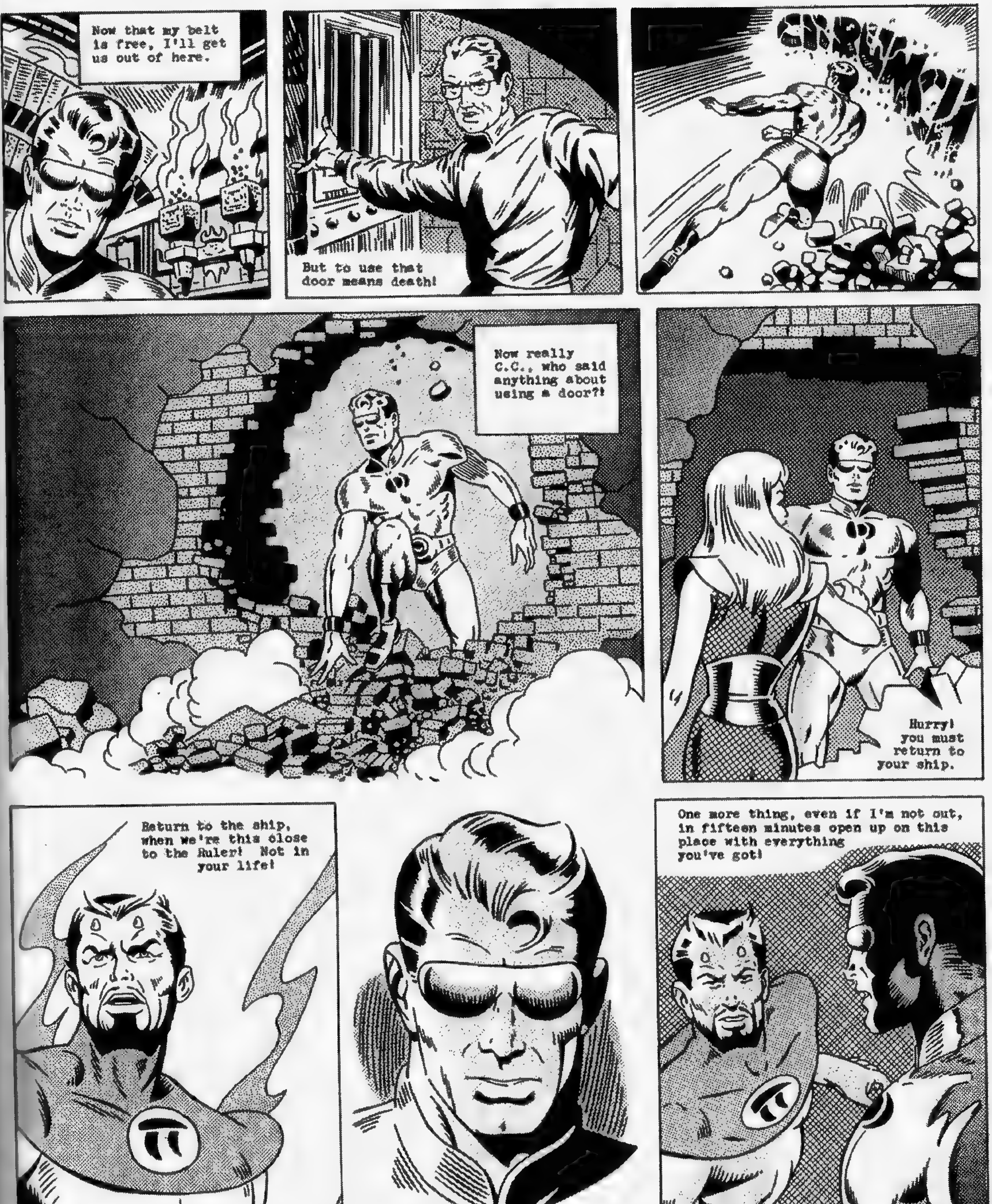

Dr. Volta! Congratulations on retrieving The Adonis.
Thank you, David. It's good to see you again.
Finding The Adonis would have been so much easier, had I been able to send a man back to search for it.
Still haven't solved that problem, eh.
No! Every animal I send into the past undergoes a molecule change that kills them. It seems that the time probe can only transmit inanimate objects.
Uncle Kurt, why don't I get The Adonis, to show David. I'm sure he'd like to see it.
Alright, dear. It's in the time probe room.
Tell me, Doc, how've things been, while I've been away? Have people begun to accept Kristen as one of them?
I'm afraid not, David. Bigots of our world, distrust the fact her mother was a Venusian and that she has a sixth sense.
WHAT - ?!
EEEE!

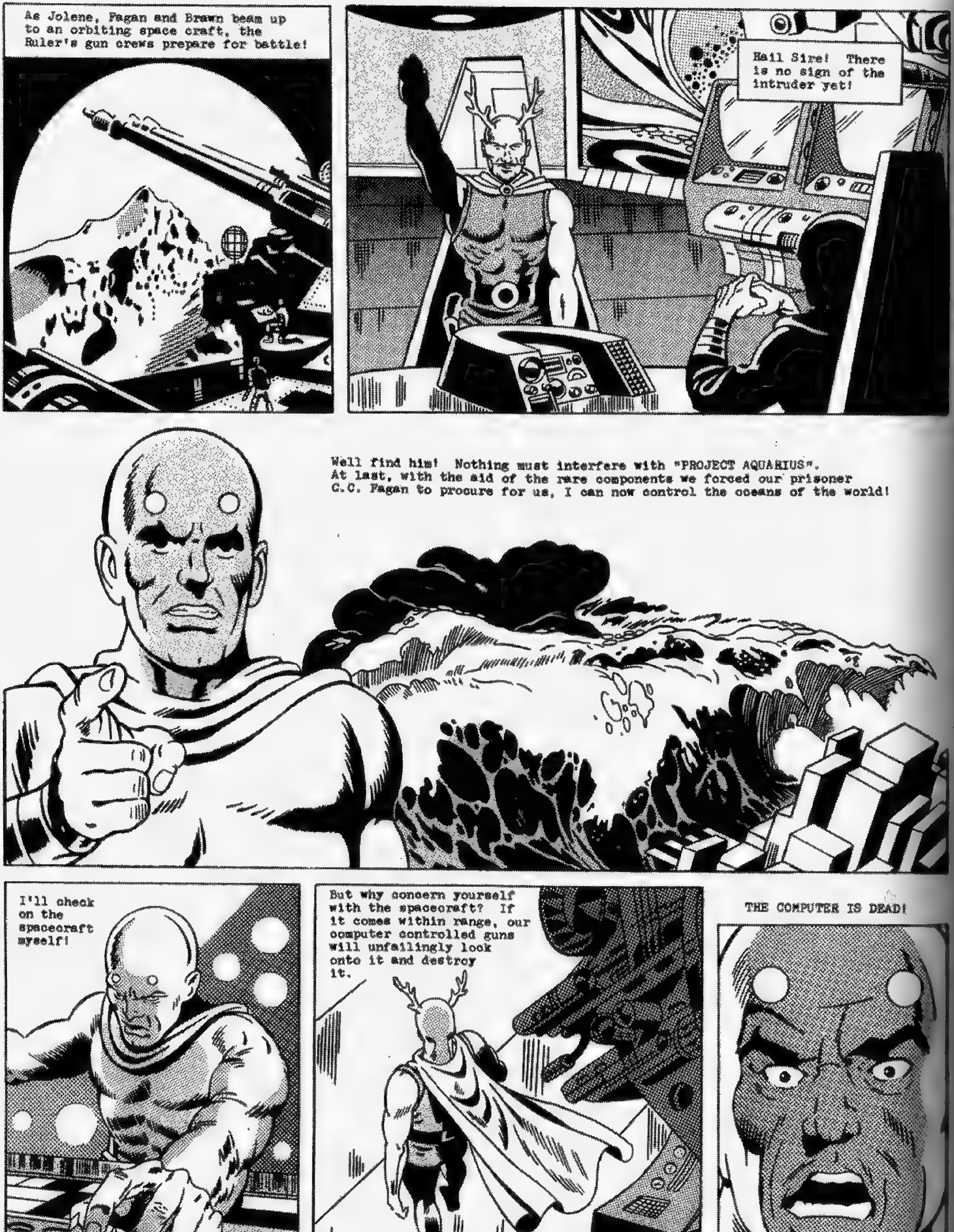

Kristen's scream instantly brings David and Volta to the probe room. David steps forward and throws open the door!
He sees it for only an instant - Then it is fired!
A ray-gun! Outlawed, to all but space explorers, its blast throws them stunned across the room!
Unable to move, David sees Kristen lying on the probe's transmit panel.
He sees a hand turn a dial, then push a button.
The probe is activated and Kristen is gone!
Now The Adonis is mine!
It was Surrette! Summoning all his strength David gets to his feet to....
ATTACK!

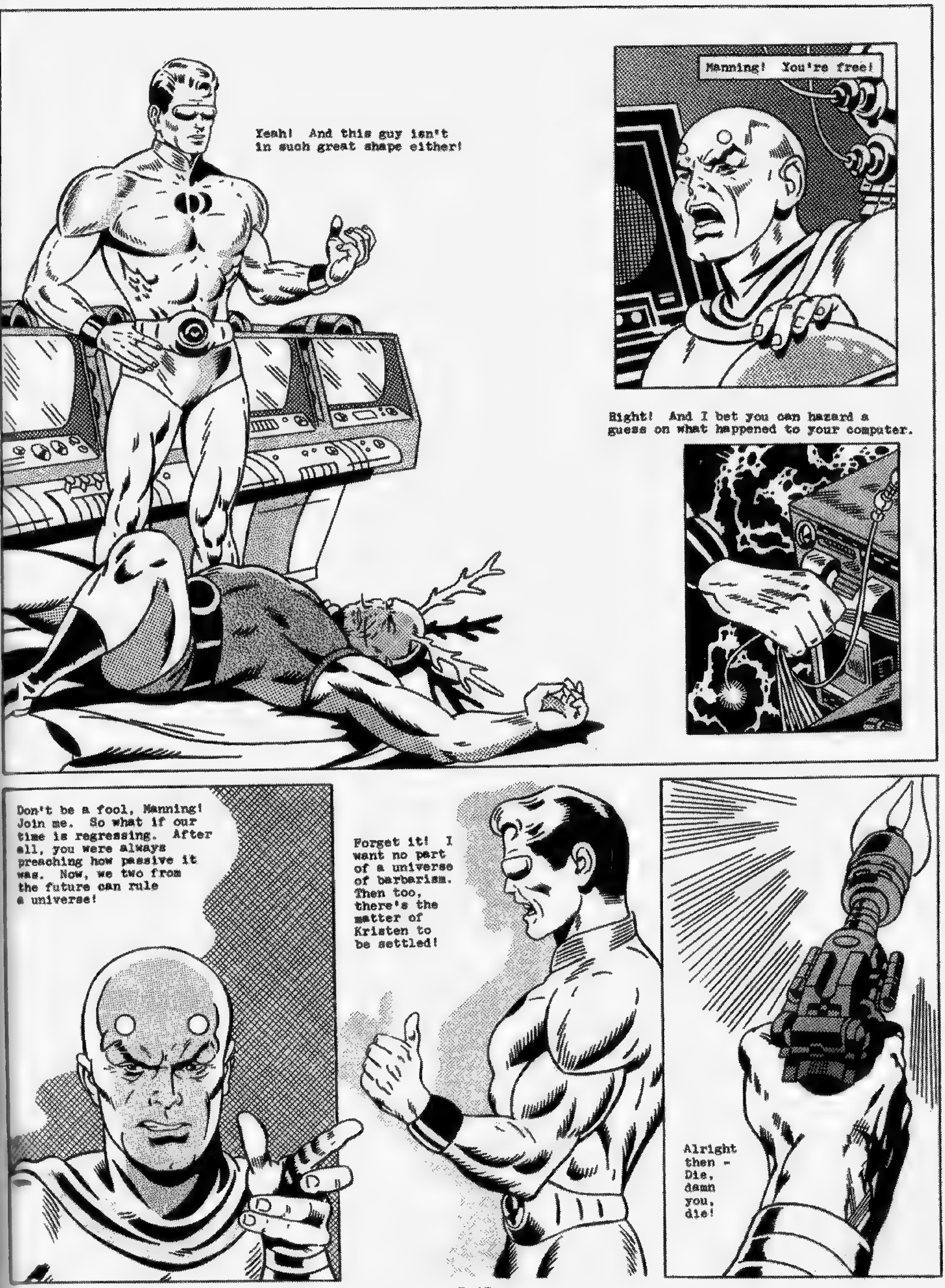

Though in agony, David lashes out with uncontrollable fury.
He presses the fight onto the transmit panel. But the ray blast he received finally takes its toll and....
A well placed blow knocks him to the floor.
Recovering his gun, Surrette screams..."I won't waste time sending you back in time. I'll blast you to atoms!"
Unnoticed during the fight, Dr. Volta is now at the time probe's controls.
SURRETTE TURNS, BUT TOO LATE!
YAAAH!

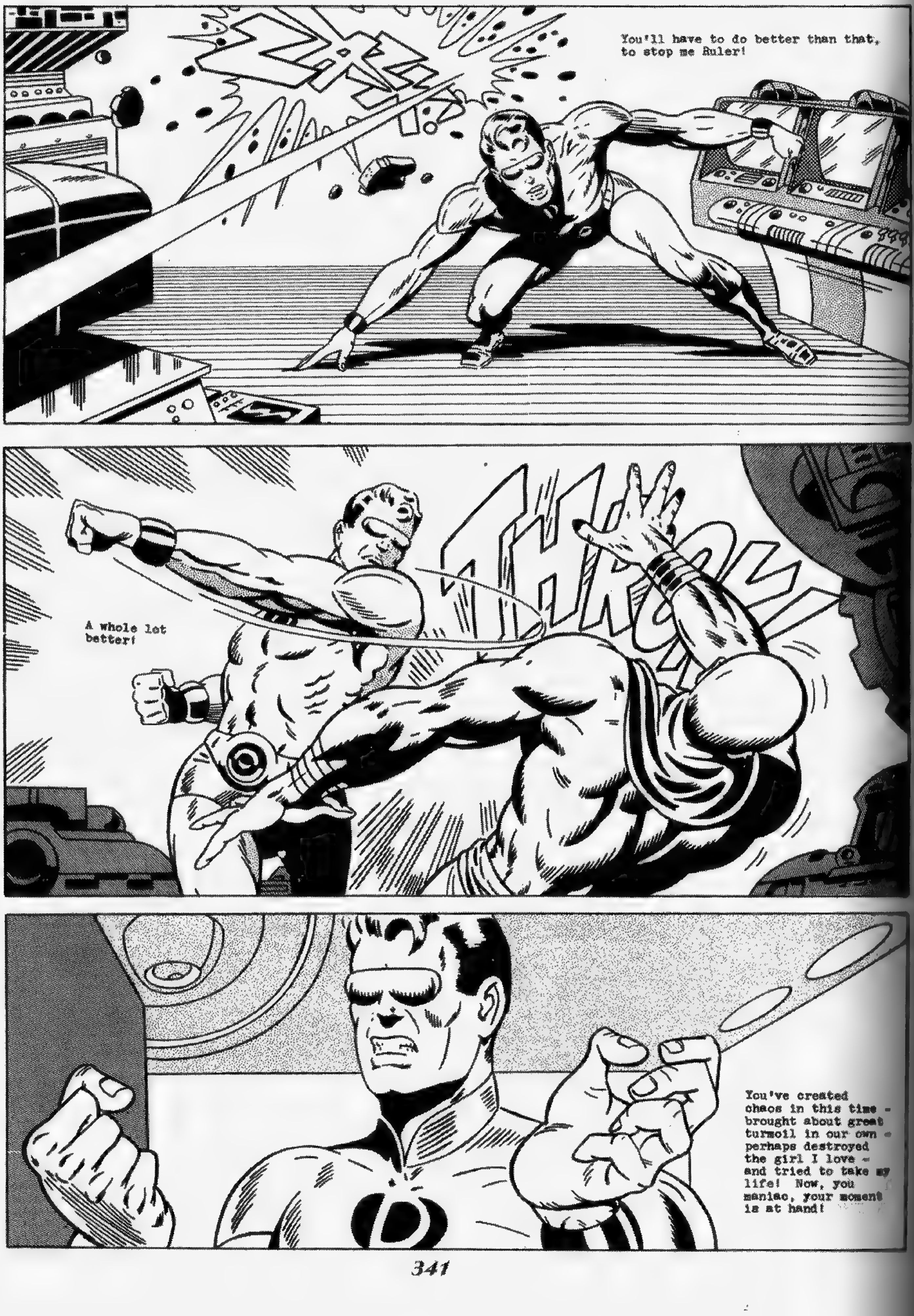

Surrette was gone---dealt the same horrible fate as Kristen. Dr. Volta and Manning thought them both dead until about 3 months later....
Violence came to 3961!
It was soon learned, through use of the time probe, that Surrette had survived the time trip and now, known as The Ruler, his evil was changing history and causing a regression in 3961!
The past was not without its defenses. Heroes, like SPACE GUARDIAN, came forth to fight the Ruler's menace.
Dr. Volta discovers that a man can be sent back in time. Death is caused, by the stress of a return trip.
Number One, President of Earth, decrees that Manning be sent back to stop the regression
Threatened with imprisonment if he refuses, Manning agrees to go. He is given a battle suit, designed by Dr. Volta and listens closely as Volta explains its uses.
Doc, if Surrette survived the time trip, maybe Kristen did too. Only the past holds the answer. A changing past that's causing a savage future.
And so, David Manning is sent to fight an evil centuries before his birth.

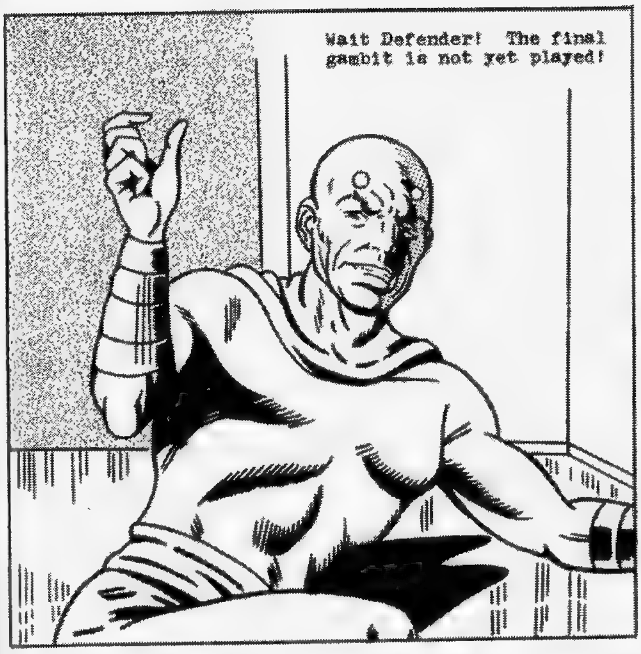

It might help, if you offered a few ideas on how we might escape from here!
The Defender's thoughts return to the present, but before he can answer Brawn a figure appears in a flash of energy.
Beaten the Ruler yet, boys?!
Jolene! How in blazes did you get here?
I beamed down from my spacecraft, after tracing your exact position with its sensors.
Jolene takes a small weapon from her belt and says: "I best remove that cap from your belt David, as I'm sure both I and my spacecraft must be detected by now!"
And detected they are, as the Ruler's soldiers mobilize.


Now that my belt is free, I'll get us out of here.
But to use that door means death!
Now really C.C., who said anything about using a door?!
Hurry! you must return to your ship.
Return to the ship, when we're this close to the Ruler! Not in your life!
Look Brawn, I'll take care of the Ruler! Your duty is to your queen. Get her and Pagan to safety. Besides, I'll stand a better chance here alone!
One more thing, even if I'm not out, in fifteen minutes open up on this place with everything you've got!

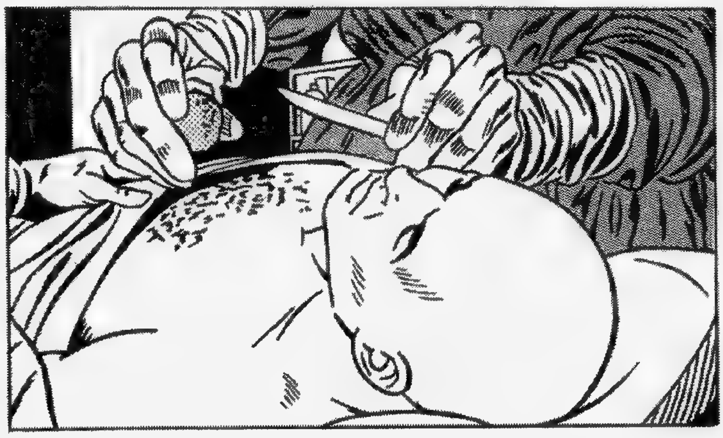

As Jolene, Fagan and Brawn beam up to an orbiting space craft, the Ruler's gun crews prepare for battle!
Hail Sire! There is no sign of the intruder yet!
Well find him! Nothing must interfere with "PROJECT AQUARIUS". At last, with the aid of the rare components we forced our prisoner C.C. Fagan to procure for us, I can now control the oceans of the world!
I'll check on the spacecraft myself!
But why concern yourself with the spacecraft? If it comes within range, our computer controlled guns will unfailingly look onto it and destroy it.
THE COMPUTER IS DEAD!

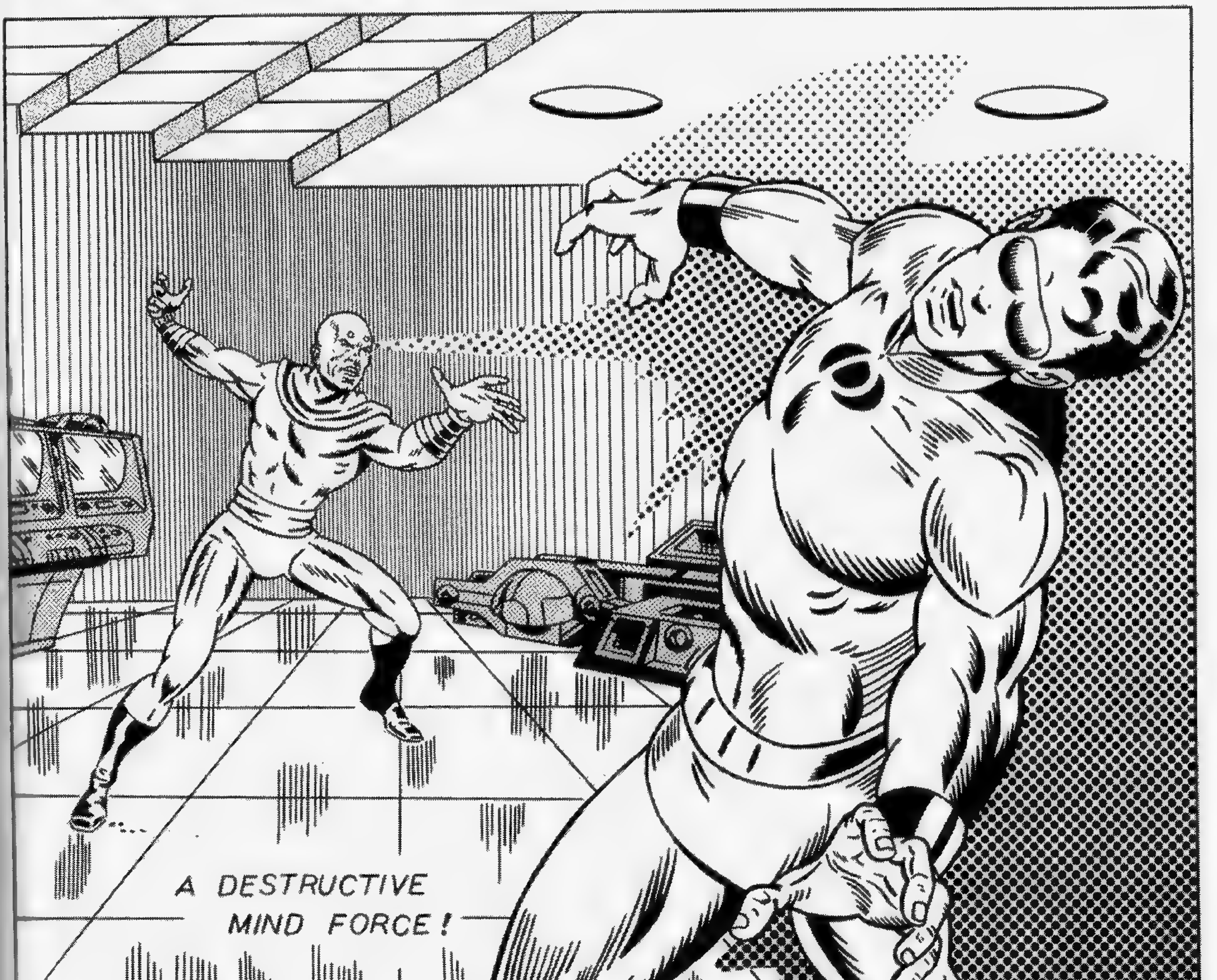

Yeah! And this guy isn't in such great shape either!
Manning! You're free!
Right! And I bet you can hazard a guess on what happened to your computer.
Don't be a fool, Manning! Join me. So what if our time is regressing. After all, you were always preaching how passive it was. Now, we two from the future can rule a universe!
Forget it! I want no part of a universe of barbarism. Then too, there's the matter of Kristen to be settled!
Alright then - Die, damn you, die!

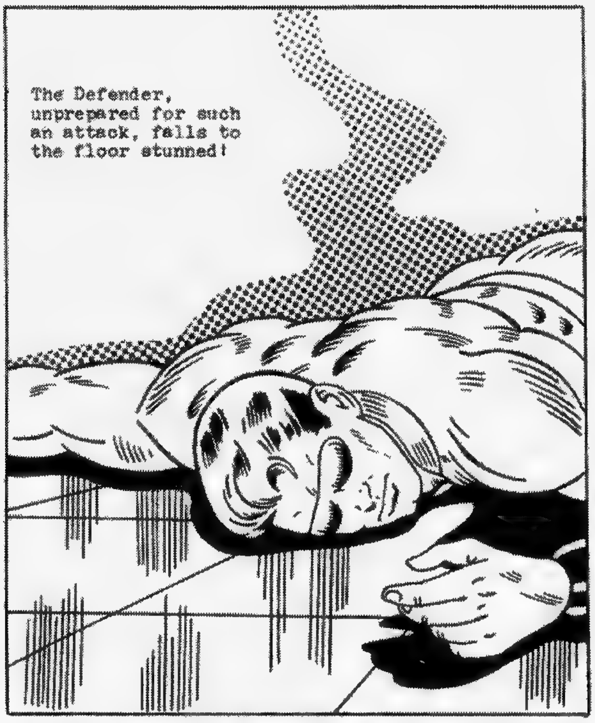

You'll have to do better than that, to stop me Ruler!
A whole lot better!
THROW
You've created chaos in this time - brought about great turmoil in our own - perhaps destroyed the girl I love - and tried to take my life! Now, you maniac, your moment is at hand!

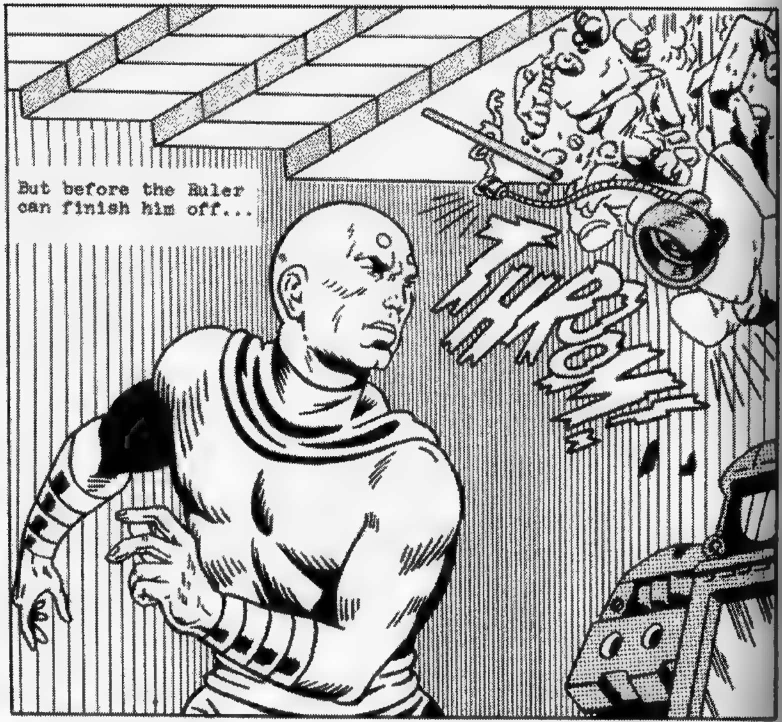

Wait Defender! The final gambit is not yet played!

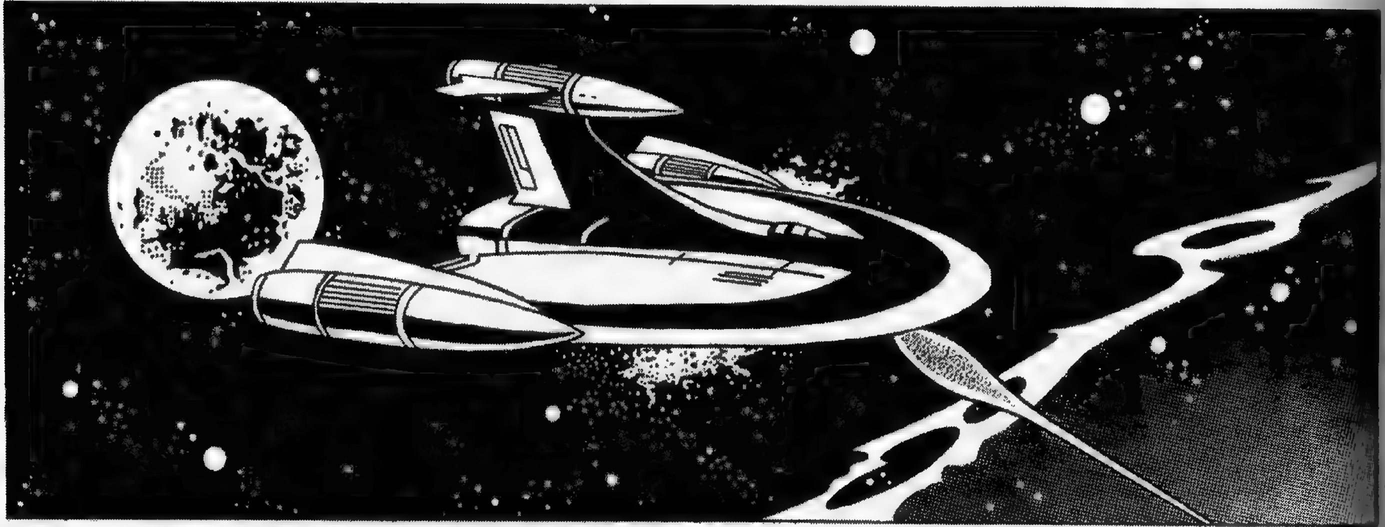
After my untimely arrival in this era, I stole certain radio parts and created a sub-space transmitter. With this, I contacted the most war like race of this time, The Myphestians. They brought me to their planet, where I instructed them to place two discs in my forehead. It was through these discs that I became their ruler! A ruler that led them on a path of conquering destruction, unequaled anywhere in the galaxy! Though it taxes me terribly and I can only use it for short periods of time, the discs give me the power of........




A DESTRUCTIVE MIND FORCE!

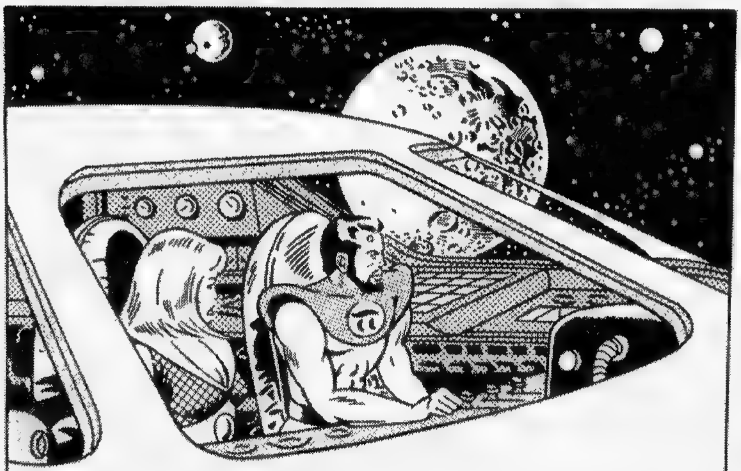

The Defender, unprepared for such an attack, falls to the floor stunned!

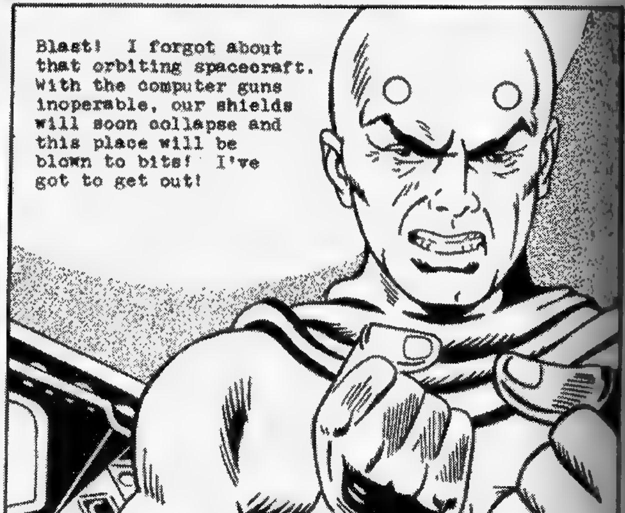

But before the Ruler can finish him off...
THROOM

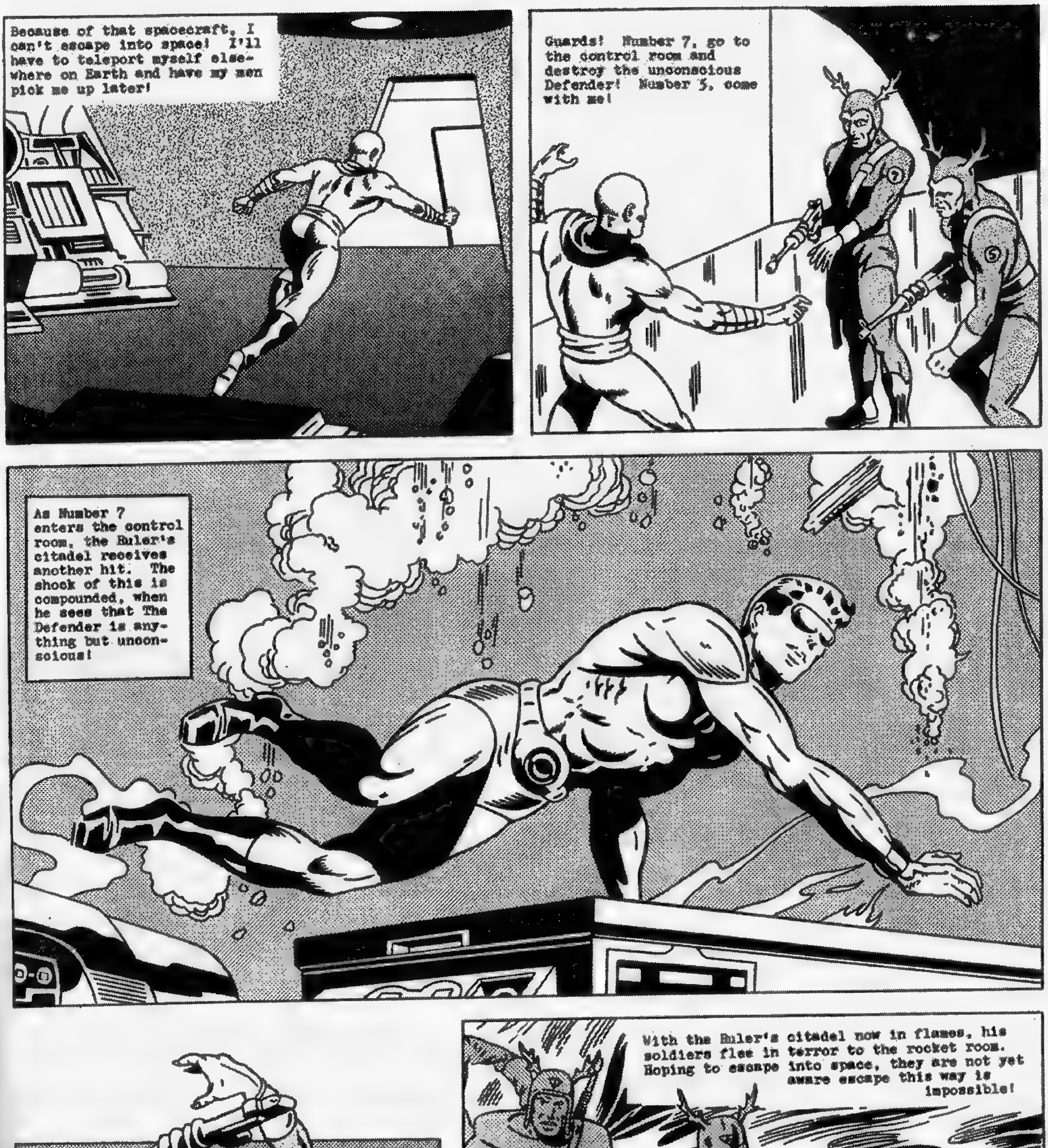


Jolene screams, "Brawn, you've opened fire on the Ruler's citadel with David still inside!"

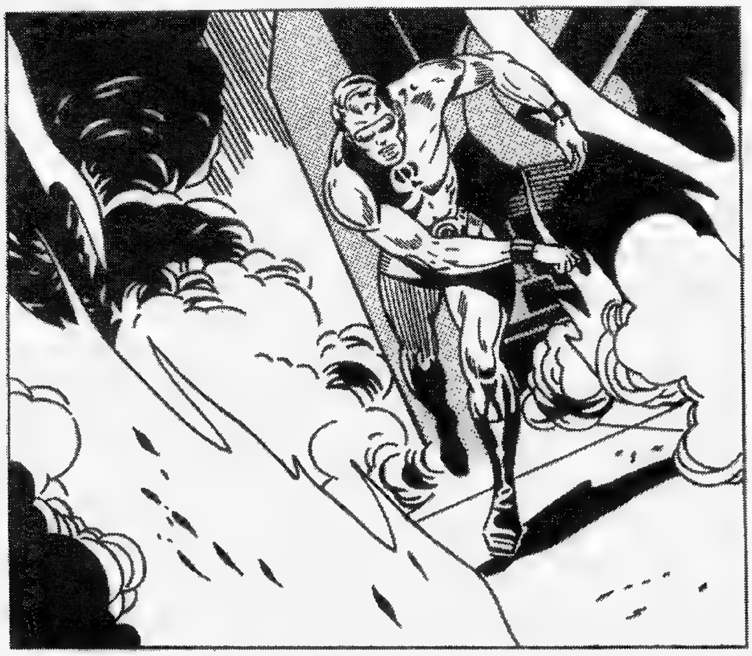
Brawn replies, "I know, my Queen, but it was at his own request and the Ruler must be destroyed!"

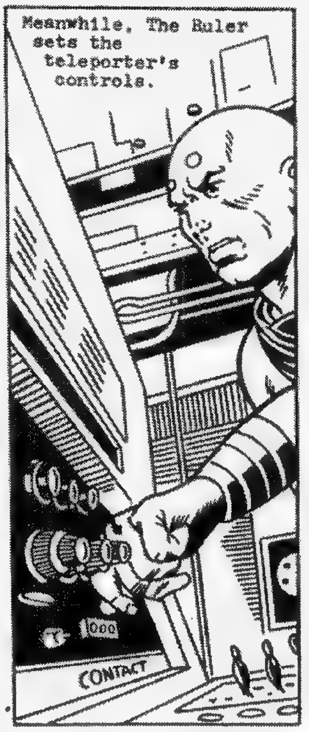



Blast! I forgot about that orbiting spacecraft. With the computer guns inoperable, our shields will soon collapse and this place will be blown to bits! I've got to get out!


Because of that spacecraft, I can't escape into space! I'll have to teleport myself elsewhere on Earth and have my men pick me up later!
Guards! Number 7, go to the control room and destroy the unconscious Defender! Number 5, come with me!
As Number 7 enters the control room, the Ruler's citadel receives another hit. The shock of this is compounded, when he sees that The Defender is anything but unconscious!
THUD
With the Ruler's citadel now in flames, his soldiers flee in terror to the rocket room. Hoping to escape into space, they are not yet aware escape this way is impossible!

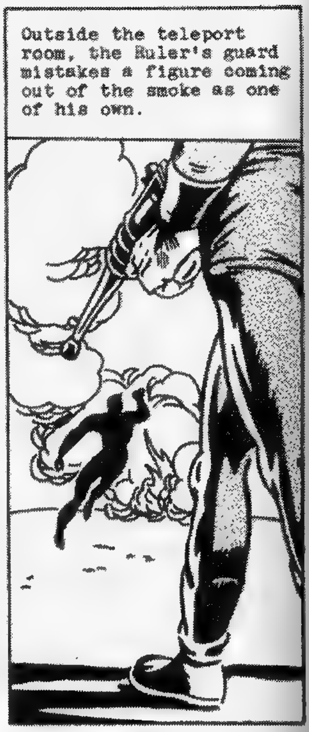
Having extracted the location of the teleporter, from Number 7, The Defender races through the now deserted corridors in pursuit of The Ruler!



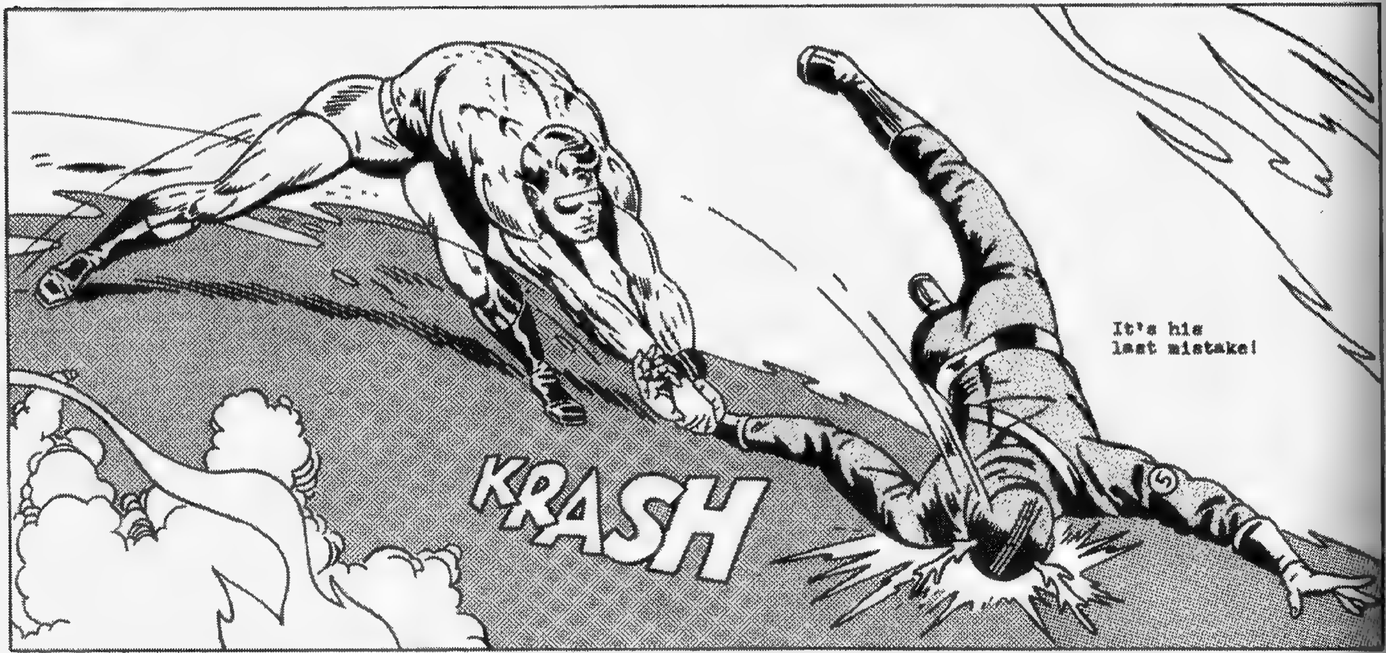


Meanwhile, The Ruler sets the teleporter's controls.

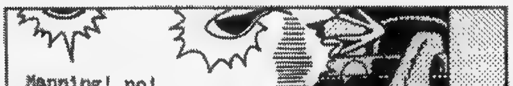
CONTACT
1000



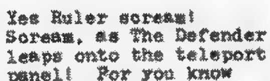
Outside the teleport room, the Ruler's guard mistakes a figure coming out of the smoke as one of his own.



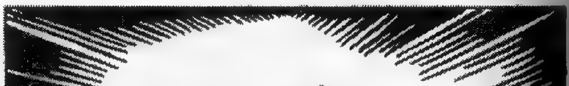
KRASH
It's his last mistake!

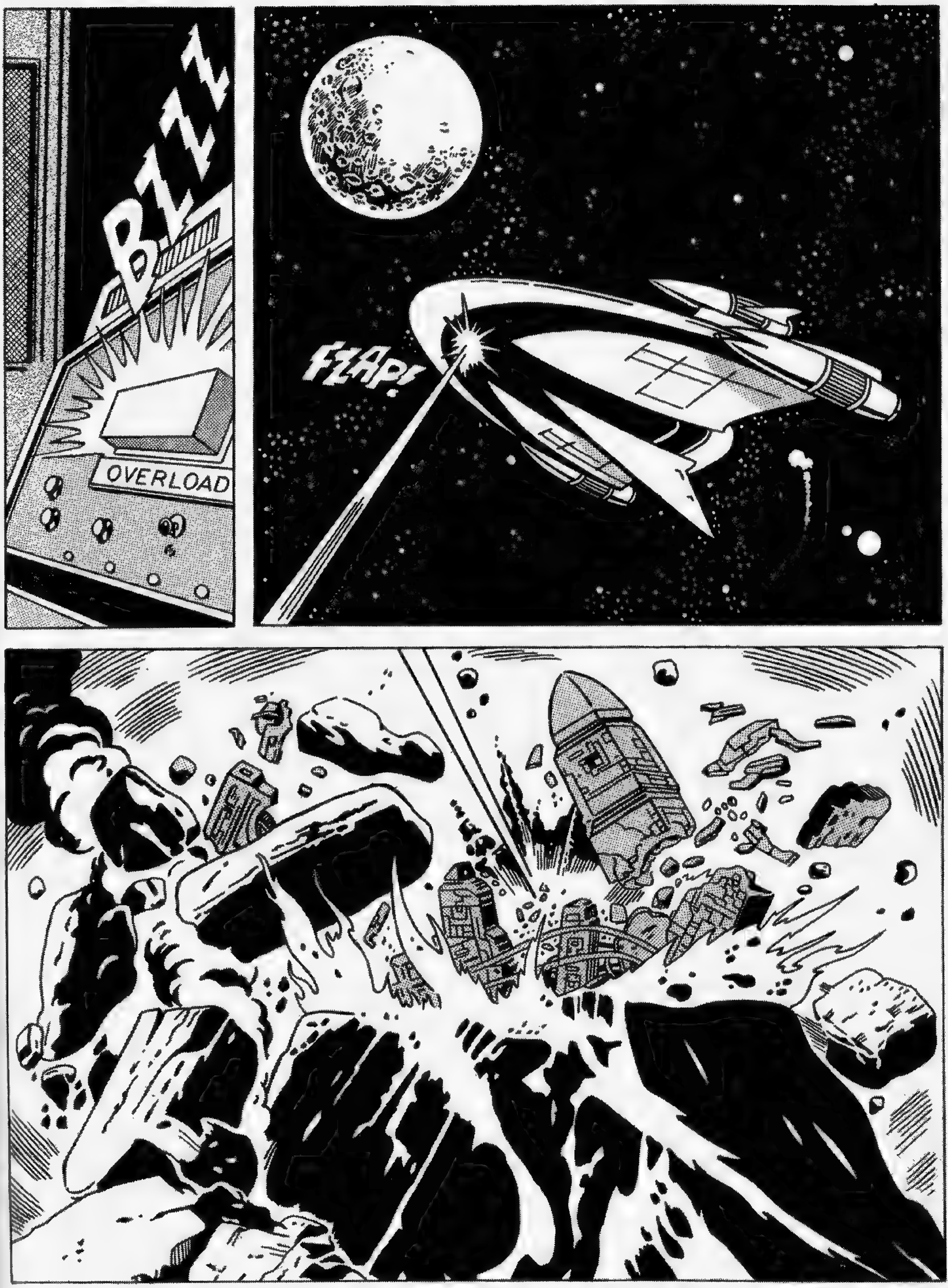


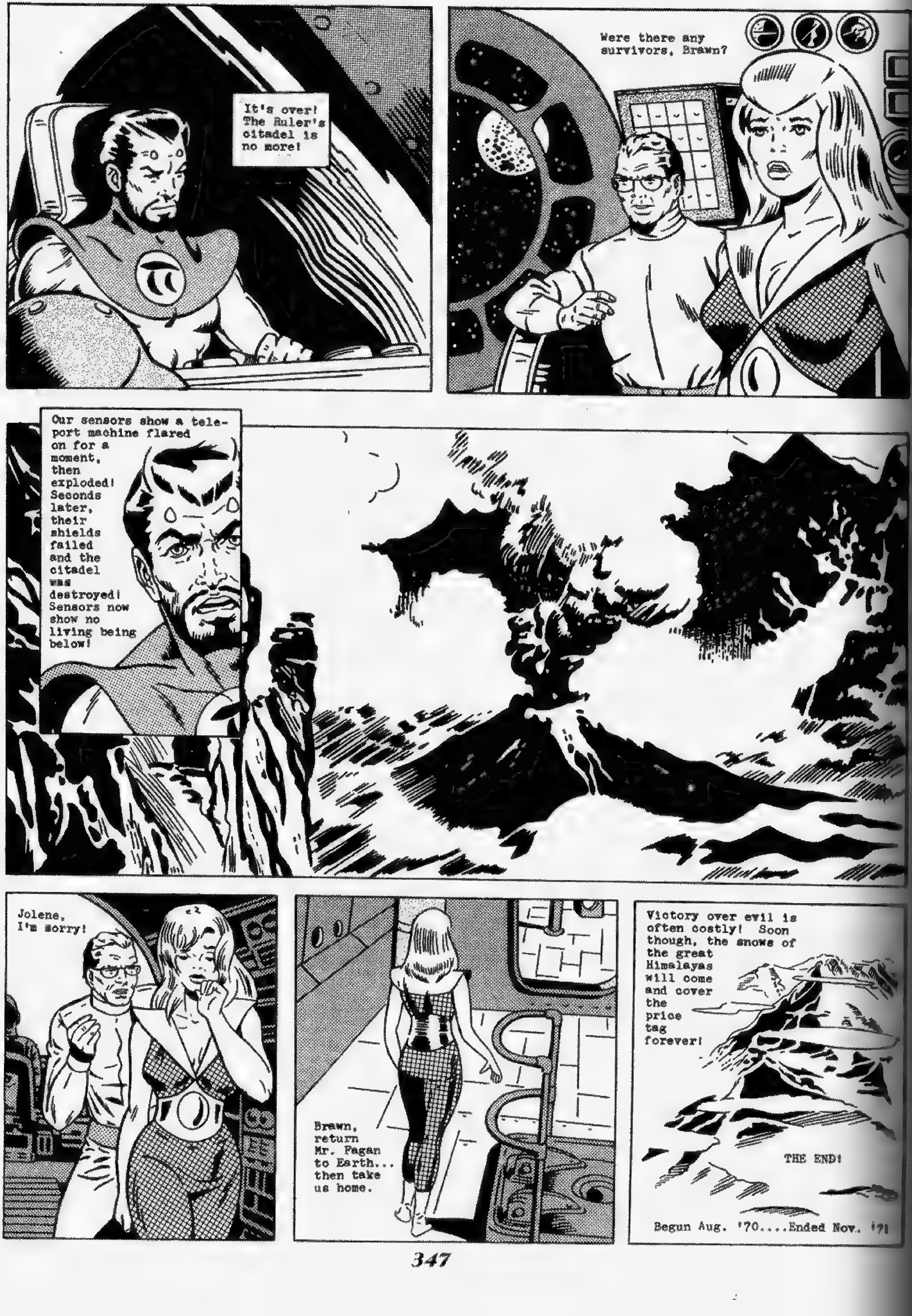
Manning! no! NO!



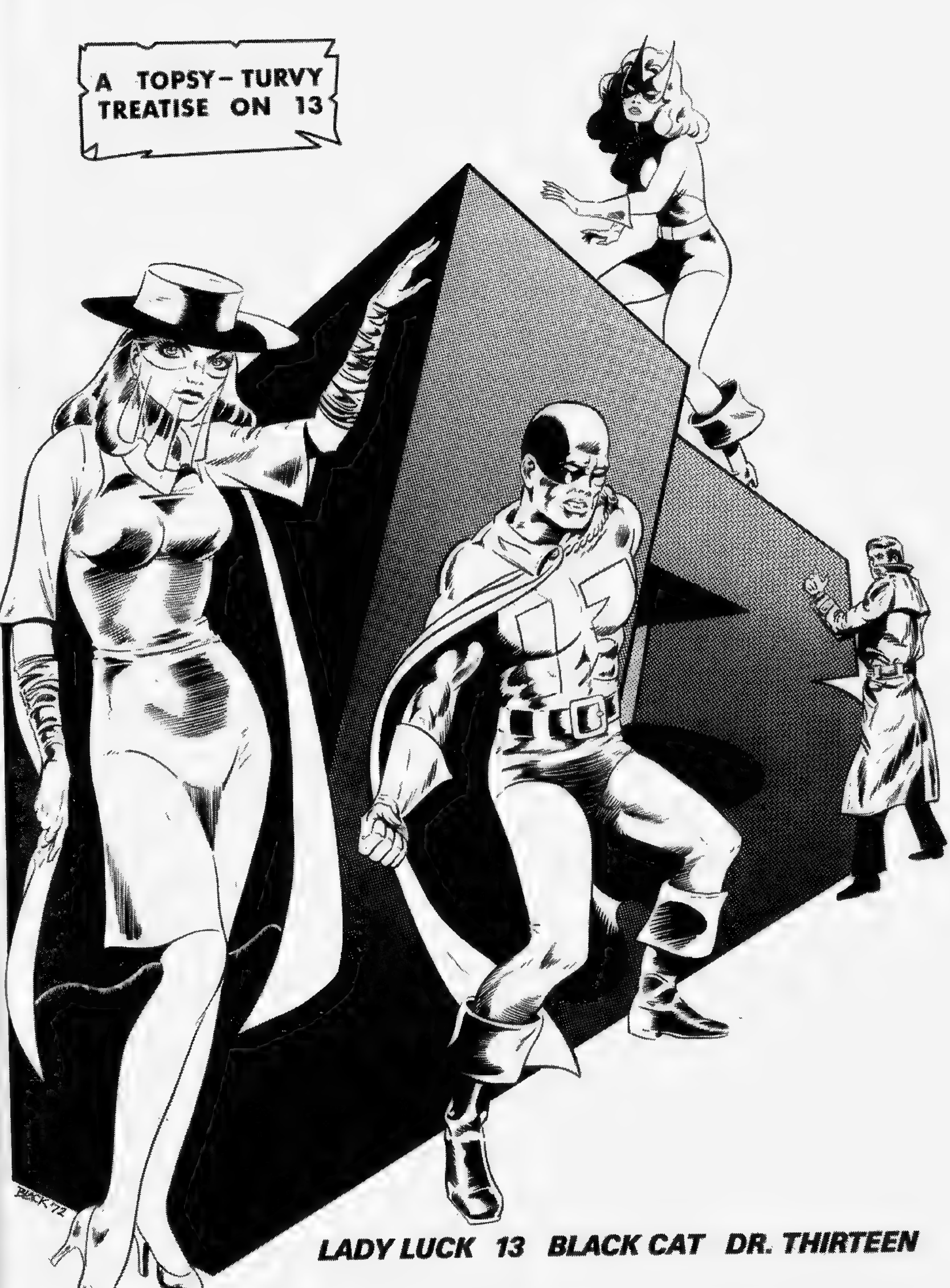
Yes Ruler scream! Scream, as The Defender leaps onto the teleport panel! For you know this action will overload its settings and cause a malfunction!




BZZZ
OVERLOAD
FZAP!


It's over! The Ruler's citadel is no more!
Were there any survivors, Brawn?
Our sensors show a teleport machine flared on for a moment, then exploded! Seconds later, their shields failed and the citadel was destroyed! Sensors now show no living being below!
Jolene, I'm sorry!
Brawn, return Mr. Pagan to Earth... then take us home.
Victory over evil is often costly! Soon though, the snows of the great Himalayas will come and cover the price tag forever!
THE END!
Begun Aug. '70....Ended Nov. '7

A TOPSY-TURVY TREATISE ON 13



LADY LUCK 13 BLACK CAT DR. THIRTEEN

• 05701 •

by TOM FAGAN

THIRTEEN...DARK LEGACY OF OUR TIMES!

THIRTEEN...BROODING SYMBOL OF LUCK RUN OUT, DESTINY GONE SOUR, THE WHEEL OF ILL-FORTUNE SPINNING TOWARD AN UNESCAPABLE END, FATE-IRREVOCABLE, THINGS OUT-OF-HAND!

Think on Thirteen. Twelve minutes and one will suffice. Thirteen...the rebel number; the nasty numerical misfit. Always, the outsider. For is not the circle the mystical symbol of life? And the circle can be divided into twelfths or components of same but never, no never, into Thirteen parts or the odd multiples of the number! Thirteen, then, the adverse life factor...the unknown, that which is to be feared, the thing that strikes from without, the chance, the accident, the fluke, the hazard, the hit, the hoodoo... that which lies waiting just beyond the firelight circle of sanity with proof man's age-old terrors are not mere insurrections of his imagination but rather that which is real is false and that which is dead is not truly dead at all, but simply sleeping!

This then is an article about Thirteen. It is a gentle, fun-loved skimming of the past. My good fortune if it suits you; my bad luck---and yours---if it doesn't. Be forewarned though, I make no pretense this material is deeply researched. It's not, nor is it intended to be. It is presented as a nostalgic trip revisiting old friends and some newer ones too. It is dredged up from memory, rereadings of favorite stories, and recollections of the fireside mutterings of old grand-dames. If it must be judged, may I ask it be solely judged on those terms. Persons attempting to do otherwise will be shot...to paraphrase Mark Twain somewhat!

So meet: A man called Thirteen and his boy companion, Jinx! Lady Luck...the woman in green! Dr. Thirteen - who believes only what he sees and not always then! She who the underworld fears as "The Black Cat"...a spitfire in black satin! A clouded individual, his last name is "Btfsplk!" Dr. Drew visiting a non-existant 13th floor in an old hotel! Two-Face...his spinning coin. Twirling for good or evil. Victim or benefactor...the decision hinges on the downward plunge and the ultimate reading of..."Heads Or Tails!" The cold-blooded hate of a man, whose full name is an explosive combination of misery and despair...Jonah Hex! Thirteen raps of the gavel...The 13 Club is brought to order! Out of the four-color future materializes Thirteen, his awsome appearance signaling not the demise of one super-hero, but several!

These capsulated accounts commenced on July 13th, written by yours truly who has 13 letters in his legal signature, and sent on from Rutland, Vermont, whose zip code numbers total 13. 0 5 7 0 1, borrowed courtesy of the U.S. Snail and Post Office officials, for the express purpose of titling this article.

Sometimes, the forces close so tightly about a man he in retaliation--perhaps as the last desperate measure--takes the issue, adopts it both in heart and name, to forge psyche and psychosis into a powerful new personality! Such was the beginning of one costumed crime fighter.

Hardly the hero type was Harold Higgins; even his name didn't sound right for comics. It had a ring of a George Bernard Shaw character, not the instant identity appeal commonly given champions of justice. Harold's name was his handicap in more ways than one. Besides lacking luster, it had thirteen letters in it. That in itself was meaningful and significant. It was an appropriate name...one tailor-made and perfectly suiting a man whose luck was that usually ascribed to thirteen...All Bad! Without fail some sort of misfortune was surely his on the 13th of every month. Even worse tragedies would stalk him each Friday the 13th. It was a tiresome and troublesome existence that Harold Higgins had to endure. However, even the hexed can have their hour if they are strong enough to seize it and the stars can be criss-crossed favorably if a man has the stones to flash the finger squarely in the face of Fate.

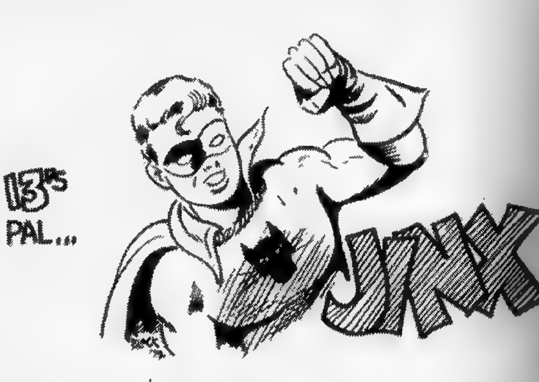
Harold Higgins' hour arrived on a legendary 13th day in April. Destiny was again riding the 13th trail to skewer her unblest offspring. Down came her mailed fist and whem, Harold Higgins found himself fired. Not only was he out of work, but his name was slandered; his dismissal from gainful employe the result of a trumped-up charge. A lesser man might have slunk away, his tail beneath his legs and a hopelessness in the stance of his soulders. That would have been the course of the "old" Harold Higgins; he, however, no longer existed. Injustice had fired him with fury. He now stood ready to defend his name and his manhood. The score would be evened; the damage undone.

But when one chooses to operate outside the law to rectify on his own, one needs a non de guerre and a costumed identity to go along with it. After all, any self-respecting criminal would only snicker at a warning the likes of "Look Out It's Harold Higgins!" On the other hand, crooks would cringe and hoods howl in terror when the cry went up, "It's 13, Boys, And He's After Us!" No laughter in that statement at all.

Yes, Harold Higgins chose "13" as his namesake. Table turning time. Make the number work for him, not against him! Choose a cowled mask of blue. Add to it a flowing cape, flared gauntlets of mid-arm length, and buccaneer boots, all of contrasting red. Complete the costume with a form fitting leotard, matching the blue of the mask. Belt, the single-piece garment with a wicked-looking, heavily-buckled leather band of brown. Emblazon, in defiant white the number 13 across your chest. Make sure the number be large and designed to startle! Then and only then, swing down out of the shadows. Prowl the roof-tops; patrol the alleys! Strike swiftly! Hit hard! Merge with the darkness again! Night no longer favors the criminal. Like his adopted numerical name, the man spells bad luck for those who prey on society.

Initially, as 13 he proved the charge leveled against Harold Higgins not only false, but a frameup engineered by his former boss. 13 exposed the employer for the conniving criminal he really was! Did he lay aside his costume after this triumph? No indeed, in the grand comic book tradition he continued his war against men of evil, his battleground being the pages of DAREDEVIL COMICS of the 40's.

Again in the classic comic book tradition, 13 soon had a youthful assistant. This was "Jinx," a blond-haired boy, who in mundane, every-day existence was "Darrel Craig." As Jinx, however, he shed street clothes in favor of fighting garb identical to that of his mentor, the difference being a domino mask to hide his features and the head of a black cat as his chest insignia.



13 debuted in Daredevil No. 3 (September, 1941) and Jinx joined him two issues later. Together they were a team, until their final story which appeared in Daredevil 17, dated January, 1943.

Since the stories were written during wartime, 13 and Jinx naturally battled their share of spies, saboteurs and other enemies of America. The adventures they engaged in where short on plot but long on action.

Had 13 been a historian, he might have forseen a dire prediction in the career of Woodrow Wilson. How so? Well Wilson also used reverse english concerning the number 13. In fact it became something of a presidential fetish with him. Wilson preferred the 13th day of the month to make or announce important decisions, or otherwise whenever possible to associate his activities with this number, in preference to any other. Early in his adult life, Wilson dropped the use of his first name, Thomas, and thereafter used only the latter two-thirds of his complete name, Woodrow Wilson---which consists of 13 letters.

Was 13 at work then in Wilson's later life preventing him from achieving his dream...a League of Nations, a united world living in peace? Sheer conjecture! True, but no man toys idly with 13 if he is wise. To some 13 can bring luck; it also can take it away at any time.

13 worked wonders for Harold Higgins. However, it plagued him before and it returned to do so again...maybe it was the combination of the number and having Jinx for a companion that did it finally. For Jinx by definition means "hoodoo." And certainly Harold Higgins was hoodooed. He and Jinx appeared in exactly 13 stories in Daredevil Comics and then the series was abruptly cancelled. How's that for coincidence!

Few today recall either 13 or Jinx and if they do it's only vaguely. Their "date with adventure" was all too brief. Bernie Klein is credited with writing the origin story. Dick Wood also worked on the series. The majority of the 13 and Jinx tales though were by Alan Mandell, either solo or in the company of Dan Barry.

Enough! Farewell 13 and Jinx. A lovely lady beckons! We have our own date with adventure and not being so pure-of-heart as you, we intend to keep it!

Look upon her ladyship! Isn't she...Lethal as a lioness; Loveable as a lamb; Lively like a linnet; Lithe as a leopard; Light-footed as a lynx! She's all that and more; she's a leggy, laughing lass commanding male libido longings, liberal but not lascivious. The gaul of gangland, she's glamour garbed in green...a sexy siren with a clover, her stylish sign. Luck is a lady and this then is "Lady Luck!" And we who knew her well, weren't we the lucky ones! She first came to us...ah we remember the day well, it was Sunday, specifically June 2nd, 1940. She was a pert package done up in something new for our eyes, a "Weekly Comic Book," tucked tenderly within the folds of the more mundane reading matter of our parents' Sunday paper.

Her name was Brenda Banks, to the society bores. However, more exciting company shared the pages of her little magazine. There was Denny Colt, famed as The Spirit, the limelight-lead feature. Then the Lady Luck story. Mr. Mystic, bearing the brand of the "ruler of magic," never failed to amaze and astound us with the concluding weekly adventure. Luck---good fortune---is the heady, merry mistress universally courted by those hurled into the great gamble of life. And she certainly favored Will Eisner, who convinced the Register And Tribune Syndicate an insert comic book, with original stories was not only a money-maker, but would sell more newspapers as well. The Syndicate order went out..."Okay, produce one! Have it in our hands right away or forget the idea as far as we're concerned!" Legend has it that Eisner and his small staff, over the space of a single weekend, created and drew up the three characters destined to make comic book history.

The Spirit was Eisner's brainchild. Robert Powell helped bring Mr. Mystic into being. Eisner and Nick Cardy (actually Nick Viscardy), together fathered Lady Luck, to add the woman's touch to the newly-born trinity. That Eisner would include a heroine was not by idle chance. Indeed, he well knew the appeal of a fighting female. Had he not, two years before, sired Sheena! However, whereas Sheena prowled a jungle domain, Lady Luck's environs would be the crime- infested jungle of the big cities!

Literally the word "luck" is analogous to the old German word, "Gluck," meaning "to entice". As an ancient Anglo-Saxon verb, the word may be defined "to catch." Lady Luck did both. Along with catching crooks, she caught the fancy of the reading public of her era. She was soon a popular regular feature in Smash Comics (1943 to 1949) and for a time even had her own book, LADY LUCK COMICS (December, 1949 to August, 1950). The lady was a winner alright and Klaus Nordling her steady artist for eight years, with a heaping of Reed Crandall thrown in for good measure, way back in the early days.

The lady dazzled and delighted her readers, wearing tasteful green, the color of hope. Her attire was not of red, white and blue, nor was it bracelets of gold and a revealing cut of leopard fur. That was not her way, after all she was a lady, remember! Everything green! Only in the very first story was another color part of the costume...a red lining for the cape; otherwise all was in varying shades of emerald. In the beginning, Lady Luck deigned a mask of any sort. Only as the series progressed did she favor a facial veil and that of sheerest green and thinnest see-through transparancy!

Lady Luck, in the first canticle of her crime-crushing career, was a vigilante virgin operating outside the law. A panel focuses on her gloved hand; the embroidered design is clearly evident. Explains the accompanying caption: "The Four Leaf Clover...A Symbol That Crooks Fear And Police Spend Frantic Hours Searching For..." This is a new interpretation to say the least, but Lady Luck (and her writer) is updating the old beliefs. Probably, few readers knew or cared the slightest about the roots of the clover as a good luck charm.

(Origin of the superstition is shrouded in antiquity. Whispered down through the ages through a traditional tale that Eve, when expelled from Eden, took a four-leaf clover with her, along with her apple-carnal knowledge of Adam. As a sprig of verdue from the fabled Garden of Paradise, the possession of a mutant-clover came to be regarded as a token of good fortune and still is to this day.)

None of this quaint information is given. The clover means fear and it's the calling card and trademark of "That Elusive Femme!" Lady Luck has attempted to open a safe; a man has been murdered and police vow, "This Time (She) Won't Get Away!" All this on page one. On page two Brenda Banks is introduced as, "The Most Popular Debutante Of The Season..(Who)...Fills Her Home With The Cream Of Society!" We soon know Brenda Banks is no social-silly butterfly, for another caption relates, "But In The Next Room Brenda Changes Swiftly To The Mysterious Costume Of Lady Luck!" Why was Lady Luck engaging in burglary? Did she kill the man who caught her in the act? The answers:

Holding a cowering criminal at bay by gun-point, Lady Luck tells him..."I Knew Roberts (the murdered man) Had That Check You Forged. I Was Going To Get It Back For You!" "And I Had To Mess It Up...But Why Did You Want To Help Me!" Answers Lady Luck..."For Sentimental Reasons! Your Mother, Sarah Martin, Was My Nurse...She Loves You Trigger...And I Thought I Could Help You Turn Honest!" Pathos is relieved by the arrival of police. The command..."Come Out Of The Shadows Lady! Let's Have A Look At You!" The reply..."Sorry, Copper! But That's Not In The Rules Of My Game! A Look At Lady Luck May Spoil All Your Illusions...Goodbye!" To quote further..."With That, The Lady Springs Nimbly Through The Window Into The Night..!"

Trigger Burke has not sunk so low that he has no honor to redeem himself. He admits he murdered Roberts, while never letting on he holds the key to Lady Luck's identity. All he had to do was ask his mother and B.B./L.L.'s secret would be newspaper headlines for a day!

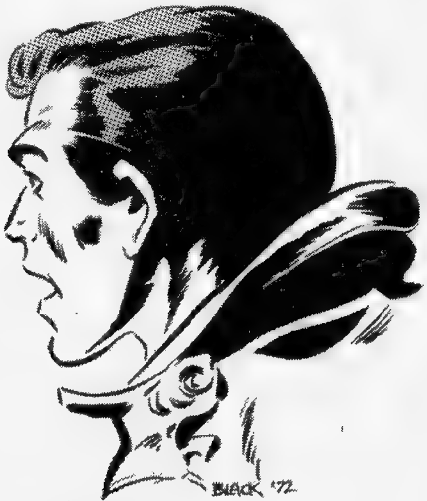
Shades of the Fantastic Four and the Baxter Building and also a smidgen of Clark Kent. Learning of a murder (another one this time in Story Two) Brenda throws on her green gladitorial garb, remarking flamboyantly, "This Is A Job For Me!" Backing up this statement is the caption..."A Wall Of Lady Luck's Sky-Scraper Rolls Back Revealing A Hanger And...A Swift Little Racer Shoots Across The Towering Sky-Line." The 'racer' if you're wondering is a small plane and its painted insignia...you guessed it...a green four-leaf clover! However, this kind of sensationalism soon was swept clean of the series and Lady Luck leveled off into stories with plausability and plot.

Faith and ye musta had reason to give up the wearin' of the green, yer Ladyship! But there's them of us that miss you, like myself here. Sundays are so quiet now! An IRA toast to you dear Lady; sure and lots of luck wherever ye be!

His name is "Terrence." "Thomas" would suit him better! "Doubter" is more apt than "Doctor!" The Phantom Stranger always refers to him using the formal full first-name of address, "Terrence." To call him "Terry Thirteen" might be unwise. Count the letters; they add up to 13. "Dr. 13, The Ghost Breaker," as the Press headlines him, would be the first to dismiss the notion as superstitious nonsense. He holds the logical explanation sacred; the paranormal poppycock! From childhood he has been drilled to do so. It is a promise he made his now-dead father to "...Never Believe That Your Life Is Governed By Other Than Natural Cause!" It is a promise that has been put to the test, a vow kept, knowing over the family line hangs, "The Curse of The Thirteen!"

In SHOWCASE, No. 80 (February, 1969) reprinted from its original rendering in Star Spangled Comics, back in 1951, the story of Dr. 13 is told. As a boy of "almost fifteen," he discovers: "...The Secret My Father Had Tried So Desperately To Keep...Throughout The Ages, The Thirteen Family, MY Family Had Always Been Suspected Of Powers Beyond Human Understanding..."

Has he, himself, inherited these mysterious Powers? Is he and his father preordained to die violently? What of the "cavalcade of grim destiny stretching over centuries"...an ancestor drowned because of suspected sorcery, another stoned to death for possessing the "evil eye", and still another burnt at the stake as a Salem witch? Will the role of doom continue unbroken?



GHOSTBREAKER

These questions fired his brain; cold fear numbed his reason. Reassurance returned as he listened to his father: "They Say It Is Our Name...The Unlucky Number Thirteen! But My Study Of Family History Shows Otherwise!" How so? Ahead of their time in such knowledge as the earth revolving about the sun, experimentation with electricity, ideas about anesthesia...the Thirteens were persecuted and murdered because their advanced theories were not understood by the superstitious populace. "That Is Why, Son, All My Life I Have Deliberately Defied Superstition To Prove That It Is Groundless!" The boy, Terrence, pledged to do likewise. Yet The Curse Of The Thirteen apparently refused to be thwarted. The father died horribly in a flaming car crash and Terrence, now a man of 24, left "Doomsbury Hall," the ancestral home to begin his lifes work of dispelling superstition. Dr. 13 steadily built his reputation as "ghost breaker" by exposing mediums, showing spirits to be tricks of the imagination, and saving the credulous from chicanery. Five years later he returned to Doomsbury Hall...to keep another promise to his father.

If communication with the dead was possible, the father would break the silence of the grave. A test had been prearranged years earlier and Dr. 13, alone before his father's portrait, prepared to carry it out. Candlelight flickered. The clock neared the hour of midnight, December 31st, an appointment with the dead neared. Midnight! Then he heard it! A sound that had in it all the misery of the ages...A sound of weeping...A sound of fear...And through all this, the distant but unmistakable voice of his dead father...!

Conviction shattered! Belief unhinged! Assurance tumbled! Faith dissolving! His father speaking...and yet? A hidden tape recorder, tripped off by a timing device. His fiancee, Marie, provided the explanation: "Your Father Planned All This...Made The Recording You Heard Tonight Before His Death...To Prove To You That The 'Supernatural' Can ALWAYS Be Traced To Natural Causes!"

Dr. 13 later married Marie. He once confessed before their wedding: "One Thing Still Bothers Me, Marie! The Violent Deaths Which Have Haunted Our Family... Will I, Too, One Day Fall Victim To THE CURSE OF THE THIRTEEN?"

Dr. 13's path crossed that of The Phantom Stranger, who was actually the star of that Showcase issue, and the stage was set for future encounters. Dr. 13's attitude? "You've Pulled Your Last Trick, PHANTOM STRANGER! I'm Gonna Prove You're A Phony If It Takes The Rest Of My Life!" When The Phantom Stranger was given his own book, Dr. 13 continued to play second fiddle or fill the role of introducing three-page back up features dealing with supernatural occurrences even he couldn't explain "But I Know There Must Be Some Logical Explanations...!"

That he is unable to discredit The Phantom Stranger... that he is to be frequently frustrated by the Unknown, the Unexplainable...perhaps for Terrence Thirteen that is THE (Real) CURSE OF THE THIRTEEN!

Beware the Black Cat...a warning handed down over the centuries! Favored form assumed by withches; favorite familiar of those damned souls who have inscribed their names willing in the Book of Satan. Names that glow as do the eyes of a cat in the blackest night!

Shun the cat. It has nine lives to spend in vendetta! It can see in the dark to stalk its victims without mercy. It is the creator of storms...the beloved of Hecate, evil goddess of the crossroads! Let not the black cat cross your path; misfortune is sure to follow. Above all, let not the cat jump over or onto the coffin as the body inside will not decompose and the deceased kept from entering paradise. "Cats, whose eyes grow wider or narrower according to the phases of the moon, are lunar animals, and are of the same nature as menstrual blood, with which many wonderful and miraculous things are wrought by magicians."

Destroy the Cat! Kill it! Avoid it at all cost! Cower you dealers in iniquity; take cover you scum; bleat you black sheep! Yes, run in terror with the rest of the riffraff and rats in human disguise. Out of the night comes The Black Cat, ready to rake the ranks of the underworld.

Who is she...this masked mystery-maiden? She's a wildcat, with beautiful flowing hair of flaming red. From shoulders to thighs she's garbed in alluring black satin. Her gloves and bucaneer boots with high heels are of similar color. A red belt snakes about her voluptuous waist. She's beauty on a rampage; a warrior woman that prowls the night seeking out the ours of crime.

Who knows where she may strike next? From what shadowy archway will she pounce? Yes, gangland, she's a fighting feline fury you'd like to destroy or better yet kill or at least avoid. Much as you'd like to, you can't...she seems to have the legendary nine lives of her namesake. She's as lithe and elusive too!

By day she's glamorous Linda Turner, movie idol. She plays her role well...that of the 'helpless' female. In Hollywood sexy sirens are wanted for the silver screen not a woman independent and free. No man likes to be put down, so Linda puts up a good front as the woman, demure and dependent, the society butterfly, and the darling of the cocktail set. Wouldn't the jet set be amazed to see her working out in her superbly equipped gymn. Linda...athletic? You must be mistaken dear...not "our" Linda.

Nighttime is another matter entirely. Forsaking evening gown for fighting costume, Linda lets her hair down and emerges as The Black Cat. A powerful ebony motorcycle is her steed, a massive machine hurtling her down a highway of adventure.

Black Cat first sharpened her claws in 1941 and her stories continued into the early 50's. She was a trend-setter and Black Canary and Batgirl, both of whom came much later, copied her style in an interesting number of ways. For Black Cat was a master of Judo...in fact for a time she gave monthly judo lessons, for the benefit of her readers. "Now Bend Sharply From The Waist Twisting His Arm Downward Toward Your Left Foot, And The Bully Flies Over Your Hip And Shoulder To Land On His Head!" While Black Canary offered no detailed courses in mayhem and mauling, nevertheless she is an accomplished mistress of the martial arts like her predecessor.

Batgirl borrowed even more from Black Cat. Only Police Commissioner Gordon knows his daughter, Barbara, is Batgirl. Likewise, Linda's father, a private detective, knew and condoned his daughter's crimefighting career. Rick Horne, Linda's boy friend, never suspected his sweetheart had a secret life; neither does Jason Bard know of his darling's nocturnal activities as Batgirl. And, of course, the motorcycle is the favored transportation of both martial misses.

Fanciers of Black Cat could read her adventures in comic books including POCKET, SPEED, ALL NEW, BLACK CAT, DOUBLE UP, STRANGE FANTASY and BLACK CAT WESTERN. "The Cat" had many artists, but some of the best... like Lee Elias and Joe Kubert. Black Cat was truly a goddess of the Golden Age!

You've heard of people who muddle tiredly through life with a dark cloud over their heads. Nothing seems to go right for them. Misfortune is their constant companion. Bad luck dogs their heels; nips their chances. Fortune quickly turns her back in their presence; Fate gives them the third finger!

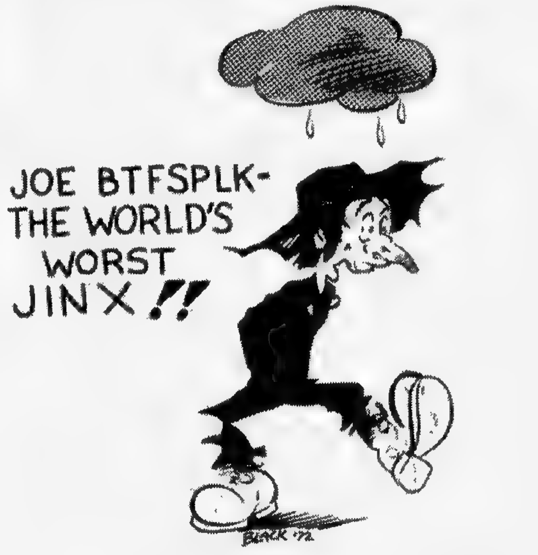
Meet such an individual. Joe Btfsplk is the name. When he passes by folk don't howdy-do him, they whisper hoodoo out of his hearing and cross their fingers hoping nothing too bad will hapen.

Bad luck has a habit of rubbing off Joe. He's a walking jinx. Your cabin's liable to collapse; turnip termites take over your patch. Joe's one man no gal, no matter how desperate she may be, tries to catch come Sadie Hawkins Day.

No one loves Joe Btfsplk. No, that's not quite true. One person--or rather one thing does. As Joe says with resignation: "All Mah Life Ah Has Had This Cloud Over Mah Haid! It Keeps Comin' Back!"

Understatement. His cloudy cohort hardly ever leaves Joe. They've grown so used to one another, they'd be lonely if seperated. Joe tried it once; he bottled the cloud. The sight of a weeping cloud under glass so unnerved him, he soon uncorked it.

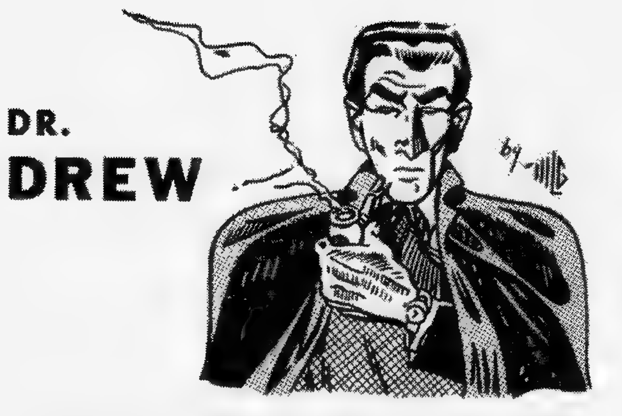
The cloud has a personality, even if Joe hasn't much of one to endear him to others. So it loyally continues to rain down on the head of its friendly little loser. A loser, loved by reader's of Lil' Abner, if not the people of Dogpatch, U.S.A.



Even today it is not unusual to register at a hotel and find it does not have a thirteenth floor, the floor arrangement miraculously skipping from the twelfth to the fourteenth. Room number 13, too, is usually ommitted in any room plan catering to the general public.

An opening panel in a story from THE SECRET FILES OF DR. DREW reflected this hold-over relic of superstitious belief. Dr. Drew is speaking: "The Story I'm Going To Tell You Is One Of The Strangest In My Experience! It Concerns An Elusive 13th Floor!... Many Older Buildings In This City, As You Know, Were Built With No 13th Floor...And The Wainwright Building Was No Exception...For The Late Adam Wainwright Was A Very Superstitious Man!"

A distraught young elevator operator tells Dr. Drew of how he let Joseph Wainwright (Adam's brother) and a woman off on a non-existant 13th floor of the Wainwright Building. He had thought the whole incident a dream or imagination, until he read in the newspaper that Wainwright had died the night before in prison, after serving 20 years for the murder of his brother Adam. Without wasting time, Dr. Drew and the young man went to the Wainwright Building. As the elevator reached the 13th floor a strange drama unfolded before their eyes. The ghost of Joseph Wainwright recreated the events that caused his brother's death. His brother was actually killed by his wife who wished to inherit his fortune. However, the recreated events go beyond what Wainwright's ghost had planned. There are events still to be played out. Joseph Wainwright laughs as the woman sobs, "You Told Me You Loved Me And If I Got Rid Of Your Brother We Could Share The Estate...!" He has no intention of sharing; the woman is thrown to her death down the full length of a ventilating shaft. Dr. Drew steps from the shadows..."And Now We Witnessed The TRUTH ...And That Includes The Way YOU KILLED LUCY...Eh, Joseph?" But he's dead, wails the elevator operator. "YES...I DIED...But I've Returned To Prove I Didn't Kill My Brother! I Meant Only To Clear Myself...But Now You've Seen Too Much...I CREATED THIS WORLD FOR YOUR EYES...AND I CAN DESTROY IT! RUN, FOOLS...RUN!"



With spectral walls crashing down about them, Dr. Drew and the young man barely make the safety of the elevator and descend twelve flights of reality. "What D'Ya Suppose Happened To The Money??", asks the youth. Lighting up his pipe, Dr. Drew comments, "Still Up In The Shaft Somewhere...But Who'd Want $500,000 With A Murderer's Blood On It?" Eyes narrow in avarice. "WHO'D WANT $500,000?? Are Y'NUTS? Me...I'd Take That Kinda Dough Outta A Dead Man's Fist!" Greed! Alone the youth guns the elevator skyward. Or is he alone? As he stops the elevator, a shade is beside him. "But There Is No 13th Floor, Boy! Remember, This Building Was Built Without One!...See For Yourself!" A yawning shaft is the last thing the screaming, falling body ever sees!

Explosion rocks the Wainwright Building into total collapse. Later it is determined the reverberating destruction occurred between the 12th and 14th floors of the old landmark. Firemen found at the base of the elevator shaft, the body of the building's night elevator boy...clutching $500,000...In Bills...!

The Dr. Drew stories are among the most overlooked better offerings of Golden Age tales. They appeared in RANGER COMICS. For sheer suspense and imaginative artwork, seldom were they surpassed. Originally, the series was known as "Werewolf Hunter" but the title was soon changed to read, "The Secret Files Of Dr. Drew; Stalker Of The Unknown."

Dr. Drew was drawn with Sherlock Holmes facial features. His dress was distinctive; he favored ascots and the wearing of a voluminious, concealing cape. He was forever lighting a pipe and the flickering match he held served to highlight the general eeriness of his appearence. If the art appeared Eisnerish, there was good reason. The artist was Jerry Grandenetti, who had served his early apprenticeship under Will Eisner. Outre angle shots, unusual panels and rich shadings, Grandenetti brought all the Eisner tricks and some of his own to his delineation of Dr. Drew. To lend an idea of the atmosphere customarily provided, here are opening quotes from one story: "It Is A Long, Weary Climb To The Old House Atop Bone Hill...On The Outskirts Of Town...But Once You Are There If He Favors You, The Famous Doctor Will Dip Into His Files And Recall For You One Of His Experiences In The Eerie World That Lies Somewhere Between Reality And Infinity. If You Are Made Of Stern Stuff, You Will Retain Your Sanity...SOME Of His Guests HAVE, You Know..."

How often has Fortune hinged on the toss of a coin... Decision determined by an outcome of "heads or tails?" To some the coin is a lucky-piece, a means of divining destiny. On which side it lands is the great gamble. An innocent pasttime yet great wealth has been won or lost because of the ever-tempting toss. Fates have been sealed by this exercise in probability. Life and death have hung in the balance of a coin's capricious chance!

The simple expediency of minted predeterminations was favored by one of comic book's most memorable villians. Savage, sullen and souless as they be, none is as bizarre as...TWO-FACE! Of the dark brotherhood, he is the most terrifying of all!

The morbid fascination of Two-Face is that he represents the dual nature of every man. He is a living personification of good turned bad...of a scale tipped from the social to the anti-social. Two-Face is the star-crossed human, a bastard child of Janus.

Now maniacal, but once sane! Formerly handsome, now hideously ugly! Sound thinking has given away to sinister schizophrenia. A promising future cartwheeled violently to a bleak future. In his sub-conscious, Two-Face realizes the dichotomy...that he is aware of it, that is the shocking horror of the doublecross Destiny has dealt him. Two-Face is literally both sides of the coin. One half of his face remains unmarred; the other is twisted and grotesque...the eye droops menacingly, the lip caught slack, the scars stand out in frenzy! Even his clothing reflects his two-sideness...One side neatly pressed businessman's attire, the other ragged, unkempt and soiled. Is it any wonder then he chooses a "two-headed" coin as his particular amulet of avidity. It is a silver dollar ---the mint-mark, 1922. Like his countenance, one side is disfigured, the other unscathed. "Heads!" determines a crime committed for self-gain. "Tails!" and the decision is that purloined proceeds are to be donated to an orphanage, a poor person or a charitable cause. Despite his ugliness, there is a touch of Pretty Boy Floyd in Two-Face's lifestyle.

Everything in two's, that is Two-Face's code. A flip of the coin is how he selects his henchmen. His crimes have a polarity about them; two always figuring in the master plan. Two banks at the opposite end of town would be a prime target. A two-toned car as the getaway vehicle, that would be doubly appealing!

Two-Faces most hated foes? They number two also. They are the daring duo...the double-dynamite team of Batman and Robin.

Before adopting his role of duplicity and deceit, Two-Face was Harvey Kent a district attorney. In bringing "Lucky" Morony to trial, Kent introduced a silver dollar as evidence to show the gambler had been at the scene of a crime. The coin, Kent told the jury, was Morony's lucky piece. Snarling with rage, Morony vaulted across the courtroom and viciously hurled the contents of a bottle of acid into Kent's face before being subdued by guards. The acid did more than eat away skin; it burned into the brain also! With half his face loathsome and repulsive to his sight, Kent brooded imagining himself a living Jekyll-Hyde. "Morony's Silver Dollar! It Has Two Faces...Clean And Handsome As Mine Once Were! I'll Make One Of Its Faces Ugly, Evil Like Mine...! A Coin With Two Faces...Like Mine! Which Face Will Turn Up When I Flip The Coin?" Mockingly, the dollar twirled upwards and derisively descended down! "The EVIL Side Wins! CRIME Wins! From This Day On, This Two-Faced Coin Will Be The Symbol Of TWO-FACE!"

Figuring the odds in an uncertain world, Two-Face reasoned calling heads or tails (good or evil) was a fair bet because the chance of either result is one-half. He knew no one expects a coin to fall heads once in every two tosses, but in a large number of tosses the results tend to even out. Those were his kind of odds!

Applying Two-Face's reasoning further, one can compute that for a coin to fall heads 50 times consecutively, it would take a million men tossing coins 10 times a minute and 40 hours a week...and then it would happen only once every nine centuries!

As far as he was concerned then, Two-Face gave even odds. More than once, he gloatingly told a trapped Batman and Robin: "My Lucky Coin Will Decide Your Fate! If It Lands On The GOOD Side, You'll LIVE! If On The Scarred Side, You DIE!"

At least "two-false" Two-Faces appeared in the comic books before the original returned. In the Batman newspaper strip (1944 to 1946) there was a different Two-Face. This "duplicate" ego was not a lawyer, he was an actor. He cashired in by hanging...his neck wrenched by wires in a fall during a flight to avoid capture. This Two-Face was brought about when a jealous stagehand substituted real acid, in place of colored water, during the re-enactment of Two-Face's career.

In 1953 the "real" Two-Face returned to plague the caped couplet anew. This time though he was named "Harvey Dent" probably in deference to a more-famous "Kent", one named "Clark!" Destiny had written a double indemnity clause for Dent. His handsome features remolded by plastic surgery, Dent had resumed his promising law career. Fortune made certain, however, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time! A safe-cracking in progress...The explosive charge already lit...Two startled criminals surprised by Dent! Attempting to apprehend the pair on his own, Dent took the full force of the delayed blast as the felons fled! Surgeon's work undone! Face again halved! The tragedy? Impossible now for medical science to return the features to normal! Dent was a marked man for the rest of his days! The Wheel of Fortune had twice-turned! The criminal career of Two-Face begins again...Batman and Robin beware! They didn't and Two-Face was imprisoned eventually.

In 1971, Two-Face returned to fluster The Batman once more, but this hassle seemed singularly uninspired to those faithful few who remembered the double-quick Two-Face of old. Purists noted the sacred-scarred silver dollar was not dated 1922! Double shame be yours for that, Neal Adams---artist; if you had given the previous stories a second glance, tradition at least would have been preserved. As presented in BATMAN COMICS 234, the Adams' Two-Face was a dubious dopplegänger of the former malignant male we both alternately loathed and liked!

In his soul, every man is a potential Two-Face! Sheer terror lays in that realization. Two-Face is us all and likewise we are Two-Face! That identification alone makes him twice as dreadful as any of the monsters in human form to ever haunt the pages of comic books!

"And they said to him: Tell us for what cause this evil is upon us, what is thy business? Of what country art thou? and whither goest thou? or of what people art thou?"

The Jonah of The Old Testament was asked these questions. And when he answered men cast him out, for had not Jonah fled the face of the Lord and was not the face of Yahweh now turned from the once-favored son! Might not the Jehovah, too, look with displeasure on any befriending Jonah?

Fear! sparked the story of Jonah down through centuries of retelling until the name, Jonah, itself, conjured up the vision of a man nobody wanted... the outcast scion of heaven and humanity...the unlucky one...the one who brings ill luck to others...the harbinger of harm!

Hex! another word of ancient meaning, also steeped in superstition! Witchery...the evil eye...the curse... the evil spell...the deadly charm...the dark forces unleashed. To hex is to be in league with the devil; to be hexed is to have Satan staring you in the eyes as you run knowing you have no chance of escape! Two words that are the embodiment of abhorrence and dismay. Join them and you have JONAH HEX! A cold-unfeeling killer, or was he? Or rather was it he used humanity instead of allowing men to use him!

ALL-STAR WESTERN No. 10 (Feb.-March) first introduced Jonah Hex to DC readers in 1972. John Albano scripts, Tony DeZuniga art, Joe Orlando editing..."three strikes and in"...Jonah Hex pictured as half ugly, boding evil and a notch above all other gunfighters. With Issue 12 (June-July, '72) National Periodical Publications, quick on the draw to capitalize on the mounting interest in the occult and the supernatural, changed the title logo to the more alluring WEIRD WESTERN TALES! Jonah's character remained as laced with violence as ever; the emphasis on the arcane, the strange and inexplicable, the mystical...that would follow appropriately enough in Issue THIRTEEN! An opening quote from that issue inquired: "What Had Alerted The Rider To The Danger Of This AMBUSH? Is He The Recipient Of Some Strange Premonition?... Is He The Possessor Of SOME Sixth Sense That Permits Him To See That Which Is Invisible To Any Living Mortal?...Or Is This Man...This Vicious, Hired Gunfighter...In League With The Devil?"

An outlaw's shivery thought: "...Whut They Say 'Bout Thet Jonah...Him Having Some Kind'a IMMORTALITY...And Being Able To CAST SPELLS Over His Enemies...You Think..."

A killer on the run after murdering his own father, the man..."Who First Showed You (Hex) How To USE Those Blasted Irons!..." thinks: "Wish Ah Could Git Rid Of This Odd Feeling Thet's Been Plaguing Me For The Last Couple Hours...Keep Thinking Thar's Someone Or Some-Thing Watching Me"...Out of the shadows comes that someone. Confrontation with a full moon and a tensed wolf to witness: "Y'Know, Ah've Heard How Many Men Yore Gun Has Sent To A One-Way Trip To HELL, But..." "Cut The Speeches An' Draw!" is Hex's ominous command. Words that are last rites...a father's death has been avenged...the friend of Jonah's past may now res in peace!

The ways of a Jonah are lonely. Declared the Jonah of old: "...I cried out of my affliction to the Lord, and he heard me...I cried out of the belly of hell and Thou hast heard my voice."

Jonah Hex cries out in a different manner...he does it with the shout of six-guns. His personal hell is his pretense he has no feelings, yet his actions belie his words. Jonah Hex cries alright but on the inside so no one may suspect. Maybe the Lord hears him; maybe not. Jonah doesn't look up; he looks straight ahead. He begs no favors, divine or other! He travels alone in this hell on earth. Alone?...Not quite...A stallion nickers gently; it is General. The bark is curt but reassuring from Iron Jaws, the wolf. Where you go, Jonah Hex, we will follow! Wolf loping... Horse in easy canter...Man hunched against the wind, his face half concealed by shadow. Against a lingering sunset they are silhouetted only as canine, human and beast of burden. Who knows who passes this twilight hour!

Thirteen men sneered at superstition and The Joker was wild! The mercenary montebank shuffled his cards stacking the deck in favor of superstitious signs and fortune-frowning Thirteen. Well might the jackanapes of grim jocularity want to protect the unsavory reputation of the ill-omened numeral. In a sense it's his number...the 13th card. Twelve pasteboards in a suit with the Joker as its illegitimate offspring!

Television and 13 raps of the gavel introduced the 13 CLUB to Gotham City viewers. Members in turn invited adversity: A black cat crossed the path of the club president; salt was spilled; three on a match; the breaking of a mirror; walking under a ladder; an umbrella opened indoors; shoes placed on a table... and so on until the presentation of the 13th member.

Interruption. A package brought on stage. Opened for public view, the parcel contained an 8-Ball and a note reading: "Since You Invite Bad Luck, You Invite Me. And Old Superstition Says That To Be Behind An 8-Ball Means Black Years...So, I Send The Thirteen Club This Omen!" No name was signed; the be-belled jester symbol served as countersign signature. No name had to be written! Consternation. The 13th member-to-be cried out, "NO! I Resign! I'm Not Superstitious---But If The Joker's In On This---I'm OUT!" In desperation, the club president, appealed to the tense studio audience..."Who Among You Will Become Member Number 13? Surely Someone...?" A silence of spellbinding seconds..."Then A Firm Voice Speaks! Will I Do?" A heroic costumed figure strode onto the stage. Hearts beat a bit faster in admiration of the man who has chosen the winged creature of the night as his own symbol of good!

Batman met The Joker head-on, as he fought to prevent a series of "bad luck" crimes aimed at the 13 Club's members. Finally Batman and Robin escaped a high voltage electrical trap by the use of a common pin. (To see how-read Batman No. 40, April-May, 1947 where the 13 Club story originally appeared - "HA, HA!" rasped the Rutland Rodent!) The Joker is finally brought to justice, when Batman scores a "ringer" with a hurled horseshoe. This is done at the stroke of one! That's 13 Hundred Hours, Army Time!

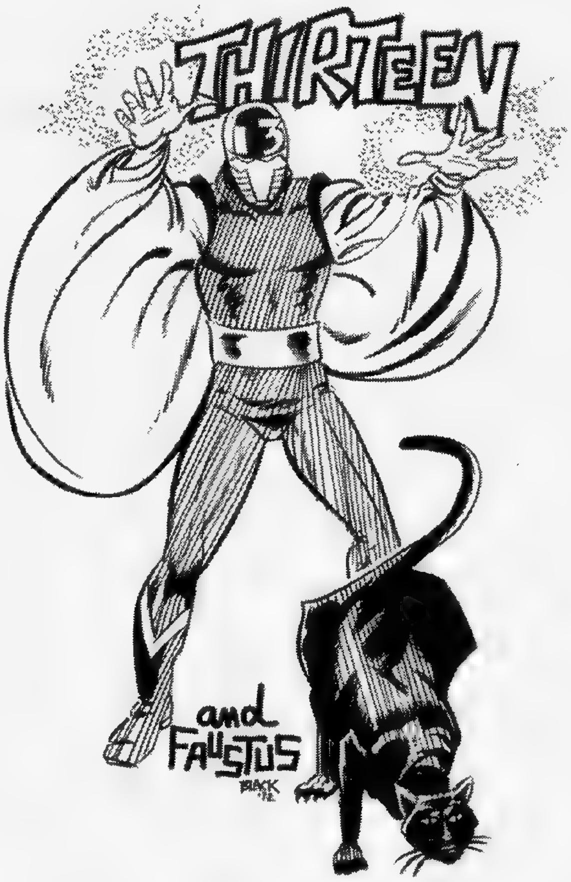
Another hodgepodge of hocus-pocus cropped up in CAPTAIN ATOM, No. 89. Dated December, 1967, the Ditko/McLaughlin cover literally howled its bewitching, warning: "THE GHOST RETURNS AS CAPTAIN ATOM FACES THE MENACE OF THIRTEEN!"

In scripting the superstitious saga, David A. Kaler proffered a profusion of paranormal paraphernalia. Leaping Legerdemain! there was: A white-helmeted figure from the future. Across the headpiece blazed the numbers One and Three identifying him as "Thirteen!" His booted green jumpsuit was belted in brown at the waist. Voluminous white sleeves swept out from his arms like huge moth-wings. Master of the Chicane, this Thirteen had as his time-traveling companion, the "Feline Familiar Faustus!" Need you be told Faustus was a black cat?

Then there was The Ghost, the familiar faceless foe of the "Atomic Ace." Returned from the outer-dimensional world of the "golden women," The Ghost has two priorities...robbery and the destruction of Captain Atom!

And Captain Atom, himself. Having forsaken a splendid costume of gold and scarlet some time ago, he was now dressed in the more acceptable (and mundane) red and blue, so dear to the hearts of superheroes everywhere. Captain Atom should have done two things. Kept to his original colors and perhaps continued on as Charlton Comics' golden boy indefinitely. That and steered clear of Thirteen. If only he had, but...

Concern of all three was a missile that had materialized out of a space warp. Enclosed within were weapons and secrets that could destroy all mankind. Thirteen and The Ghost were both aware of this; Captain Atom was not. However, he did know tests disclosed "It Is Ages Old But More Advanced Than All Our Missiles!" The battlelines were drawn. Supernatural stratagems were supernumerary. In order of progression they were: Thirteen appearing in a crystal ball warning The Ghost not to interfere! Writing on a wall, in fire, declaring..."Nothing Can Stop 13!" Magical scarves binding Captain Atom! Flipped Coins, "So Little; Yet Heavy Beyond Belief!" stopping pursuit by the Captain! An angered Ghost finding his fists filled with flowers frustrating his attempt to teleport Captain Atom out of this world! Faustus using the "Indian Rope Trick," with the magical fibers holding Captain Atom powerless!



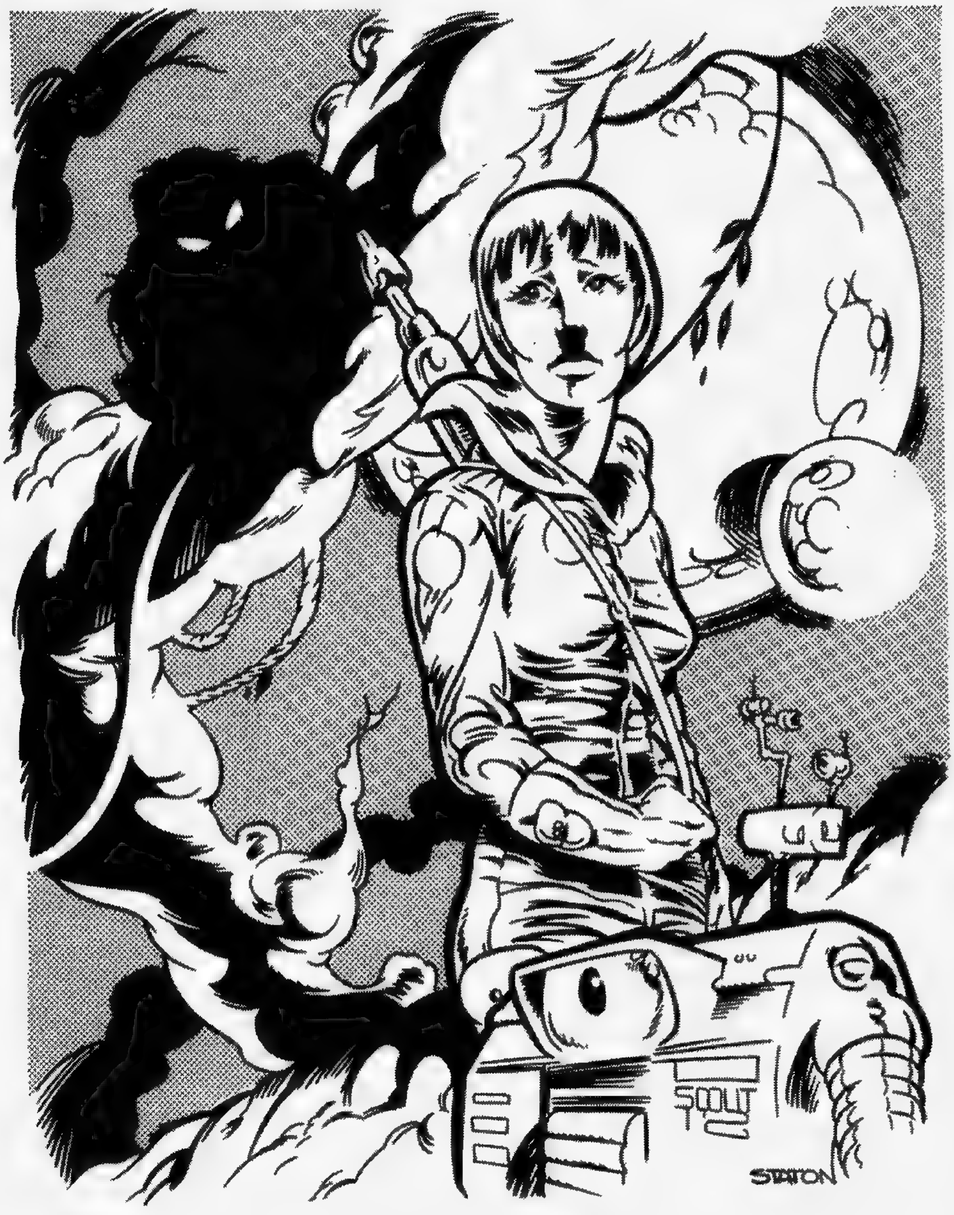
A broken mirror, a giant umbrella, a Houdini chain-wrapping for Captain Atom, and finally flowers in the place of atomic fire balls, courtesy of Thirteen, who in leaving calls back: "There's Really No Need To Stop Us As We're Leaving!" Faustus' departing yowl is the promise, "We Won't Be Troubling You Ever Again!" There is really no need of Thirteen and his cat companion returning. They have sent the missile ahead of them into the future, where they themselves arrive shortly. It is here we find that Thirteen and Faustus are Planetary Agents who time traveled back to save the Earth. Thirteen and a black cat...for once Forces of Good! A shocking disclosure!

What followed calls for a double-take, a revaluation of Fortune. A second encounter with The Ghost was promised in the very next story. It was even titled, THE SHOWDOWN IN SUNURIA! Issue 90 never saw print! The Captain Atom magazine had folded! In short order, Charlton also closed out the magazines of their other action-heroes!

Thirteen, good or bad as he may have been, certainly left his brand on Charlton Comics. After his unlucky arrival, the company's entire line shifted to a preponderance of comics dealing with the supernatural and lore steeped in superstition. Jugglery, most unjust!

Jackhammer away the concrete of civilization; see the cowering clay of humanity beneath. If science doesn't have the answers; superstition does. There is little difference between Troglodyte and Twentieth-Century Man when it comes to facing and explaining the unknown. Thirteen is still very much with us! And people continue on and on, believing Thirteen stands for Evil or Good...Misfortune or Fortune...The choice is yours! Or is the choice...That Of Thirteen!

THE MAN BEHIND THE FIRST MAN OF THE SEA



by RON FORTIER

Last winter Charlton Publications launched a new comic entitled Primus and it was based on the television series of the same name. Like the TV version, the comic dealt with the sea-going adventures of Carter Primus, a Lloyd Bridges-James Bond hero.

Now the magazine's initial appearance did little to excite the average comic fan. The cover was plastered with publicity photos of actor Robert Brown in a wet suit and had the appearance of a movie mag rather than a comic. Very unimaginative to say the least.

Fortunately, some die-hard readers were not put off by this front mess and had the daring to look inside. It would be an understatement to say what they discovered was a surprise. The interior illustrations were clean, dramatic and highly original. In short the artwork was excellent.

Perhaps more puzzling was the name of the artist, JOE STATON. Who is he?

JOE T. STATON is a talented young man with a gracious attitude towards inquisitive fans. He kindly submitted himself to our parade of questions, without hesitation and his answers were both amusing and informative.

Thus, without further rambling, we happily present Joe T. Staton, the man behind the first man of the sea

CC - Joe, before getting started, we would like to say congratulations on your fine PRIMUS work.

STATON - Thanks, I always welcome comment -- especially favorable comment, and, alas, especially as comfort for a title that has just been dropped.

CC - No more Primus?

STATON - PRIMUS will unfortunately cease with the seventh issue, in which Hubert Humphrey kidnaps Richard Nixon and Primus has to prevent W.W. III again.

CC - Do you know the reason behind the cancellation?

STATON - It seems that everyone who was watching the program was buying the comic -- but Robert Brown and my mother just weren't enough to keep either the comic or the show afloat.

CC - Don't underestimate the number of your readers, Joe. Now that Primus is gone, what will you be working on?

STATON - I've dropped back into the horror and girl's romance comics until another adventure series comes in to Charlton. I'm also doing some of the horror comic's covers now.

CC - Joe, in case the FBI gets a hold of this, how about some basic statistics such as where and when you were born?

STATON - I was born 19 January, 1948, at the Army hospital at Ft. Bragg, N.C.; thus making me, in no particular order, a Capricorn (on the cusp of Aquarius -- a classically ambiguous combination of signs,) a service brat, and 24 years old at the moment. My father was an Air Force career man and we bounced about from base to base during most of my early days, during which I picked up a love of airplanes and a dislike for staying in one place very long. After my father's death, we moved back to my mother's home in Tennessee, where I spent a rather constricted adolescence.

CC - What kind of formal education did you acquire?

STATON - I went to college in Murray, Kentucky, where I more or less majored in fine arts and wound up with my bachelor's degree in art. During that time I scrounged up a scholarship from Chapman College in California, to their World Campus Afloat program (the program that was recently going to convert to the Queen Elizabeth as its campus) and so spent about four months aboard ship studying in Europe, Africa and South America.

CC - Sounds like fun.

STATON - During the course of those four months, I encountered most of the major art collections in the hemisphere, a lot of water, and a weird California girl named Hilarie who wanted to spend her life doing Behavior Modification on children with minimal Brain Dysfunction -- remember her, she'll return to the chronicles later, though at this point she just returned to California, while I returned to Kentucky to finish school.

CC - When did you first become involved with comics?

STATON - All during high school and to a lesser degree during college, I had been involved in science-fiction fandom and had done some art for various fanzines. I had encountered comics fandom a couple of times, but had been put off by the atmosphere of twelve-year-olds stealing nickels.

CC - Sorry to hear that. Hopefully we can change that for you. Are there any comics zines you do like?

STATON - Sure -- I've been fascinated by anything that comes from Don and Maggie Thompson, or from Bill Spicer. In fact, the only fanzine -- sf or comics -- that I subscribe to currently, is Spicer's GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE.

CC - Back to the comics question itself. What encouraged you to try comics?

STATON - I had encountered Danny Adkins through the sf fanzines and had, for a short time, corresponded with him, finding out what I might expect if I tried to get into comics. Danny had a pronounced influence on most of my earlier drawings. At any rate, after I got my degree, I left for New York with an eye toward landing comics work.

CC - What happened when you arrived in Metropolis?

STATON - Danny had moved back to Ohio, and Richard Nixon's economics were coming down hard on the art field, as I tried to find work -- of any kind.

CC - For example?

STATON - I finally found a job designing rubber ducks. Well actually vinyl ducks; inflatable beach toys and P.O.P. advertising displays. I managed to put up with that for six months, in the course of which I encountered entirely too many J. Water Thompson people and so developed a lasting contempt for the field of advertising and for most of the grubs who inhabit it. I finally walked out on that one, and eventually drifted into a strictly survival job with a photographer's agent. That one didn't last long at all. Then for a few months I pasted together an offset newspaper in Brooklyn -- a job which I actually liked quite a bit -- until I was fired so the newspaper could hire two Puerto Ricans.

CC - A ghastly fate indeed. You certainly had your share of knocks. Were there any bright moments in all this struggling?

STATON - Remember the girl from the ship? Well she had re-surfaced sometime along in there, having gotten a teaching job on Long Island. She furnished all kinds of moral support during the struggling and the suffering. Jack Gaughan once said that if you want to make a living as a free-lance artist, you need either a hell of a nerve or a hell of a wife. It turned out that I had the wife, since she decided to go ahead and marry an out-of-work, out-of-luck artist. Also along there somewhere, I had gotten my first comic assignment -- a short, badly written Steve Skeats story from Warren for CREEPY. (The Amazing Money-Making Wallet....Creepy 42 Nov. 71)

CC - How did you get along with the notorious Mr. W?

STATON - Warren turned out to be a great deal more trouble than he was worth. I wanted to draw comic books and he thought comics should be filled with slick advertising illustrations. So I eventually got tired of hassling with him and mailed in the story with a bill. He paid me, ran the story and I never went back there.

CC - How did you finally hook-up with Charlton?

STATON - During an abbreviated honeymoon, we stopped in at Charlton. I got a ghost story to do and Sal Gentile, Charlton's editor at the time, and a very nice man, was sufficently pleased to send me another. Before any of the ghost work had actually been printed, Sal offered me PRIMUS. Things have been pretty solid since then.

CC - What other artists, beside Dan Adkins, do you admire?

STATON - To be perfectly honest with you, it would be a lot easier to come up with a list of people that I don't like. However, I'll try to nail down a few favorites. Gil Kane is sort of a basic style to respect; especially his early Green Lantern work as inked by Anderson. Jim Aparo and Neal Adams are beautiful in the faces they use. Each of their characters fits his part perfectly. Lou Fine and Jack Davis for their characterizations, too. Russ Manning for his authenticity (his old SEA HUNT comics are the optimum skin diver comics.) Steve Ditko as a really unique visual vocabulary, and a keen sense of design. Joe Kubert as the only guy in the business with an understanding of figure-ground relationships. I told you this would get out of hand...why not just say that I consider Don Heck and Herb Trimpe incompetent, but that I enjoy just about everybody else? Oh, one other fellow who has been remarkably helpful to me is Mike Hinge. (Mike does a lot of covers for AMAZING and FANTASTIC, covers for Lancer and a couple of Time covers lately.) Mike is a great source of information about tax laws, billing procedures, publishers, shucks ---all the nitty-gritty that keeps your head above water, the things that the art schools don't know about.

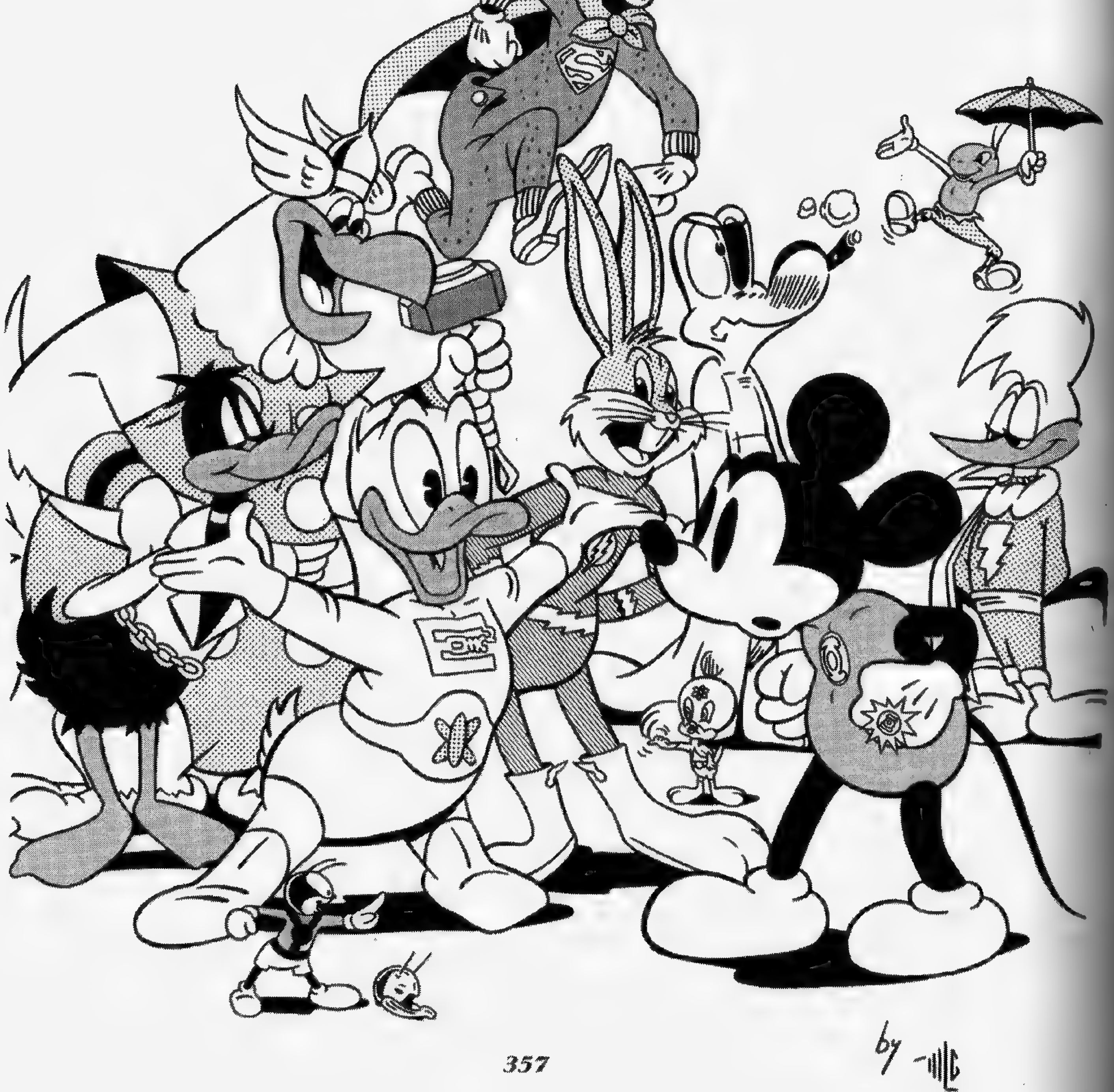
CC - If you had the opportunity to work for either DC or Marvel, which would you choose?

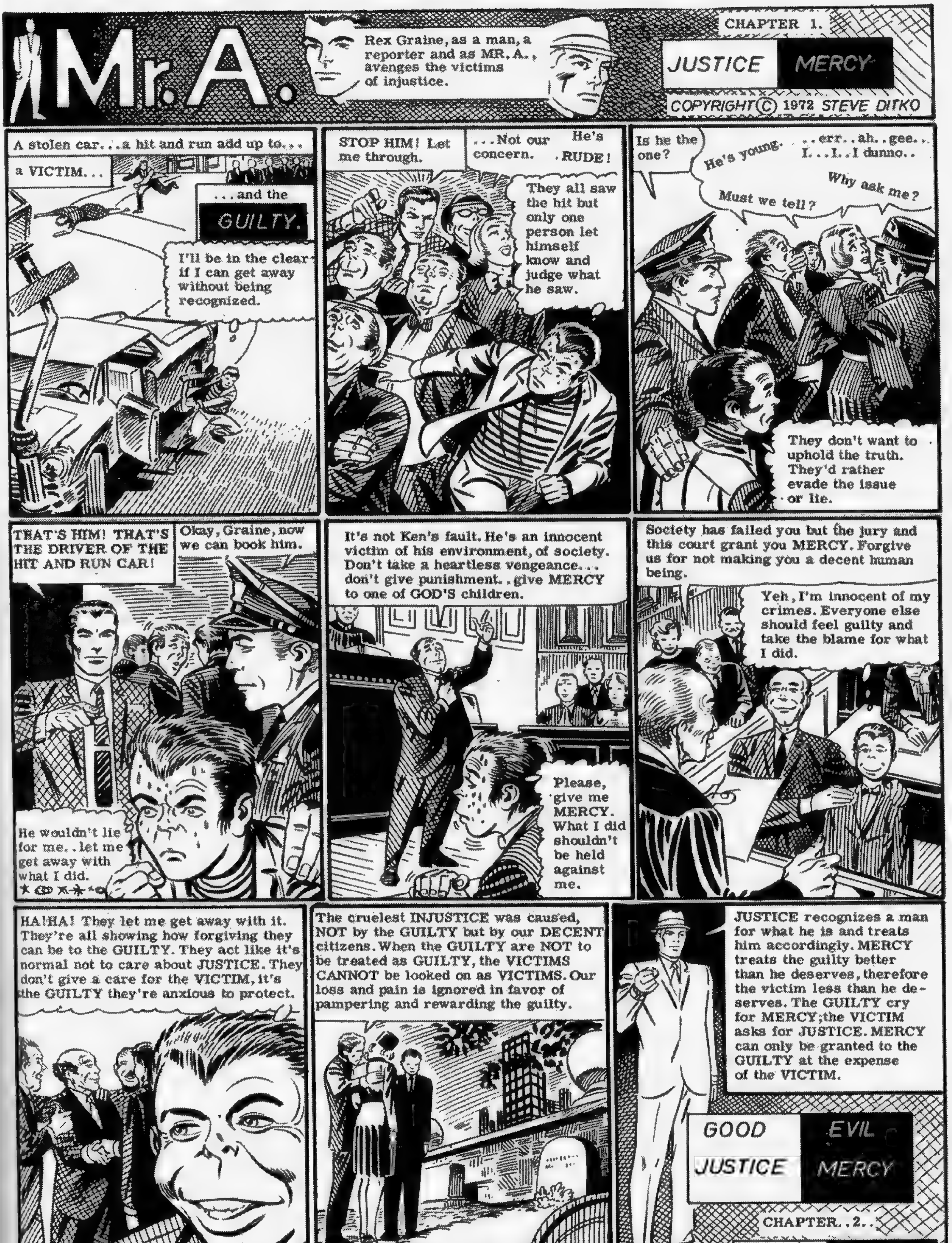
STATON - DC ten years ago, or Marvel five years ago. My real love is the kind of space opera that Julius Schwartz used to do at DC, but nobody is doing that sort of thing today. At the moment, the stuff coming from DC interests me the most -- especially their weird titles, like WITCHING HOUR and Aparo's PHANTOM STRANGER, which I'd say is my favorite of the current crop of comics. But realistically, you realize that I'd work for anybody who'd pay me -- with the exception of Warren...may unpleasent things happen to him in an alley.

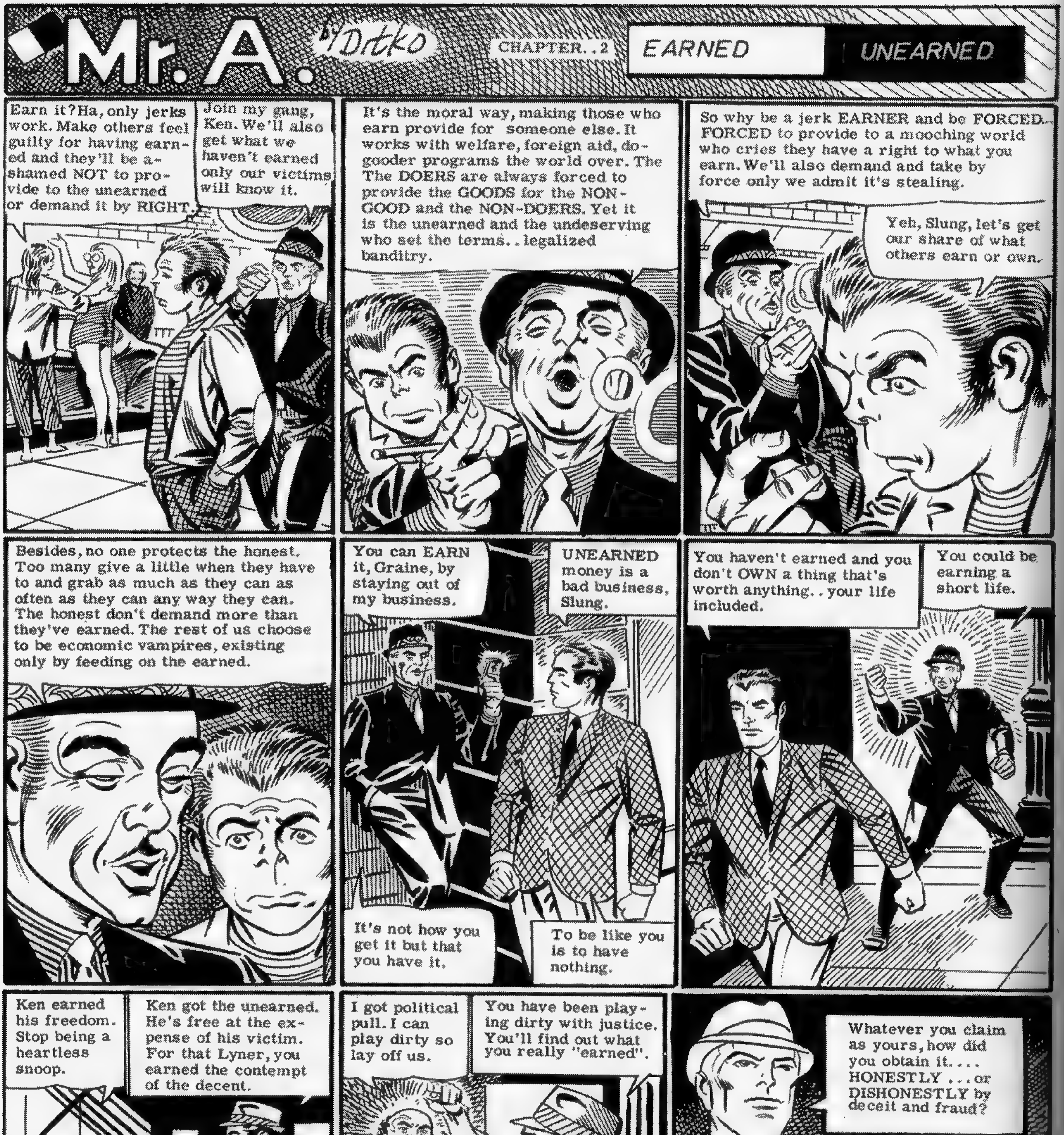
CC - Joe, your fangs are showing. On the kinder side, what advice would you offer aspiring young artists?

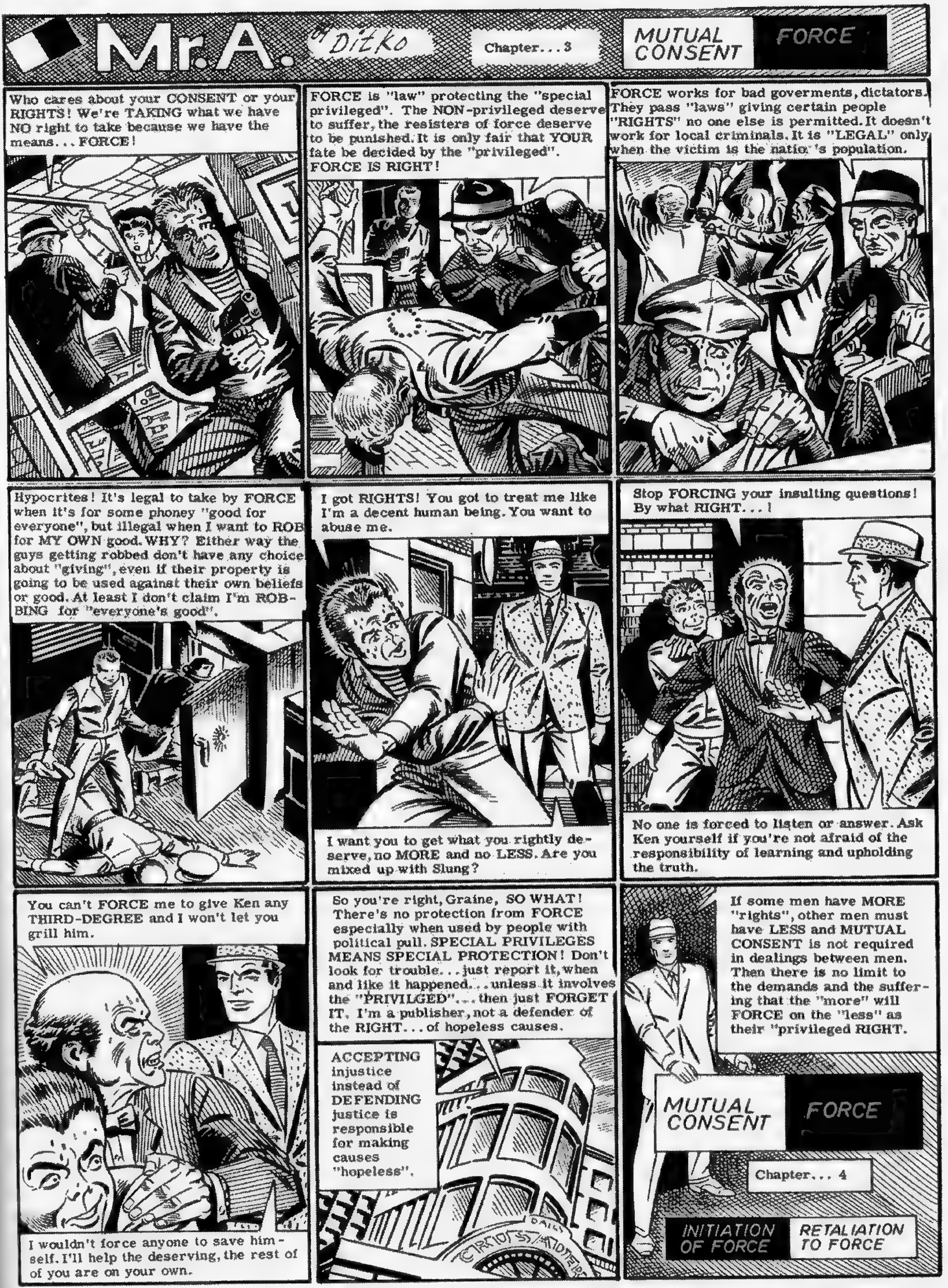
STATON - I don't think I'm the one to ask. My own experience isn't all that extensive. But the initial advice Adkins gave me seems to remain valid -- (1) Forget about the whole thing and sell insurance or something, and (2) if you're persistent and won't forget about it, remember that drawing comics, illustrating magazines, painting portraits, pasting together Revlon ads or whatever -- is a job, and that it can be a very exhausting job, both physically and emotionally. Inking 5 pages overnight to hit a deadline, or having an editor refuse to even see you, are both a bit trying to handle. So I suppose any suggestions I might have boil down to: Learn to work like a mule and learn to cope with total rejection.

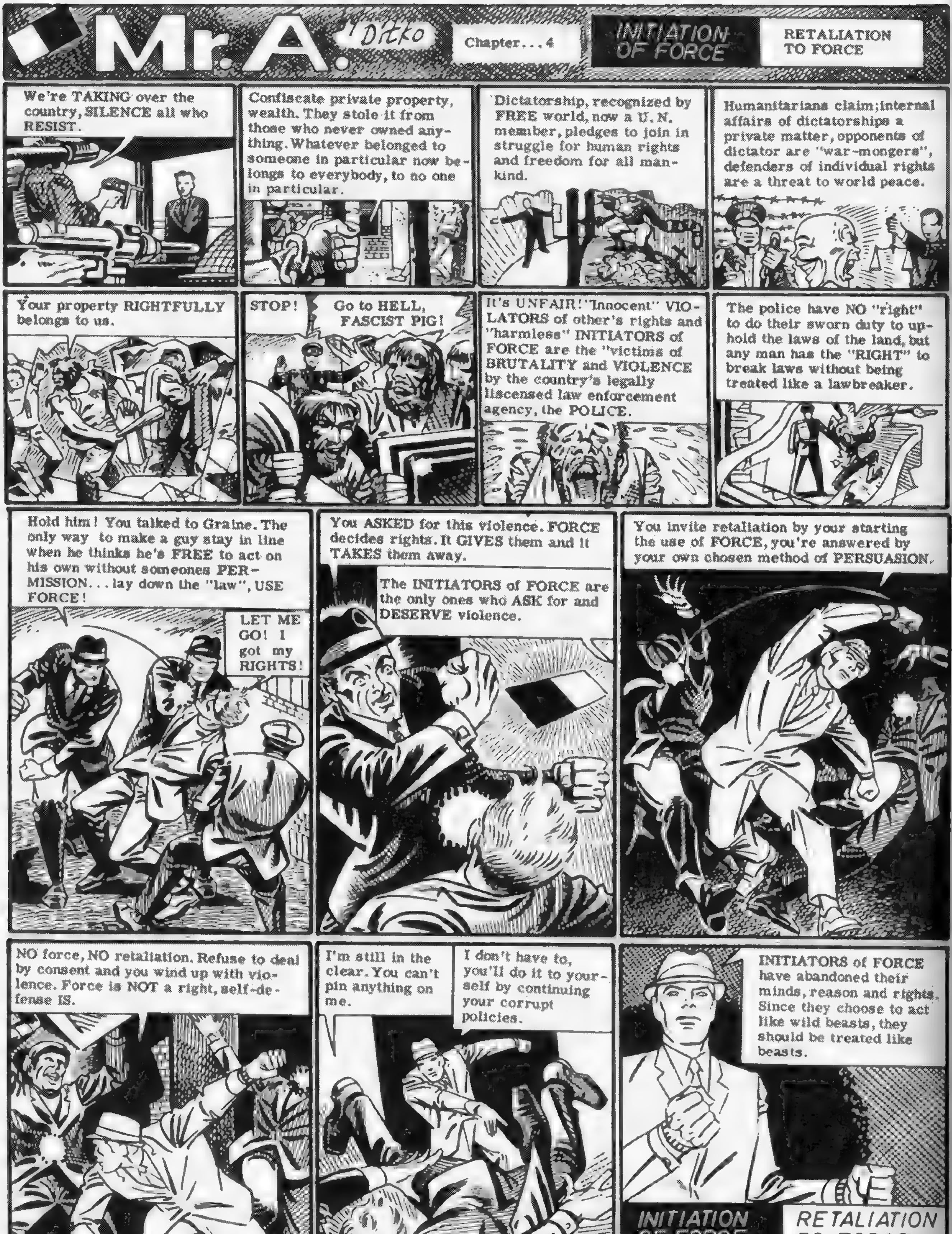
CC - Joe, thank you for this truly enjoyable and informative talk. We're betting you'll wind up on top!

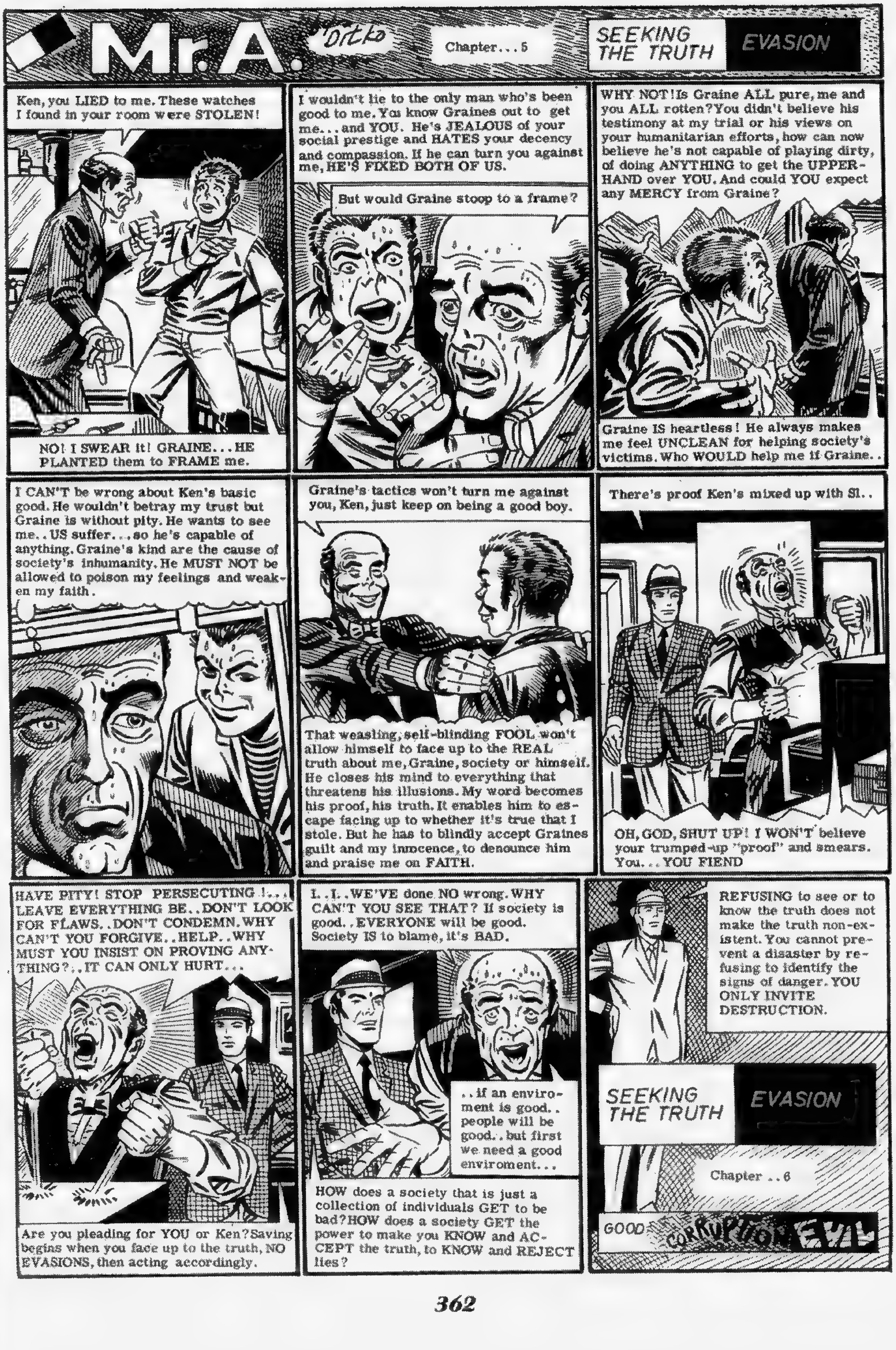


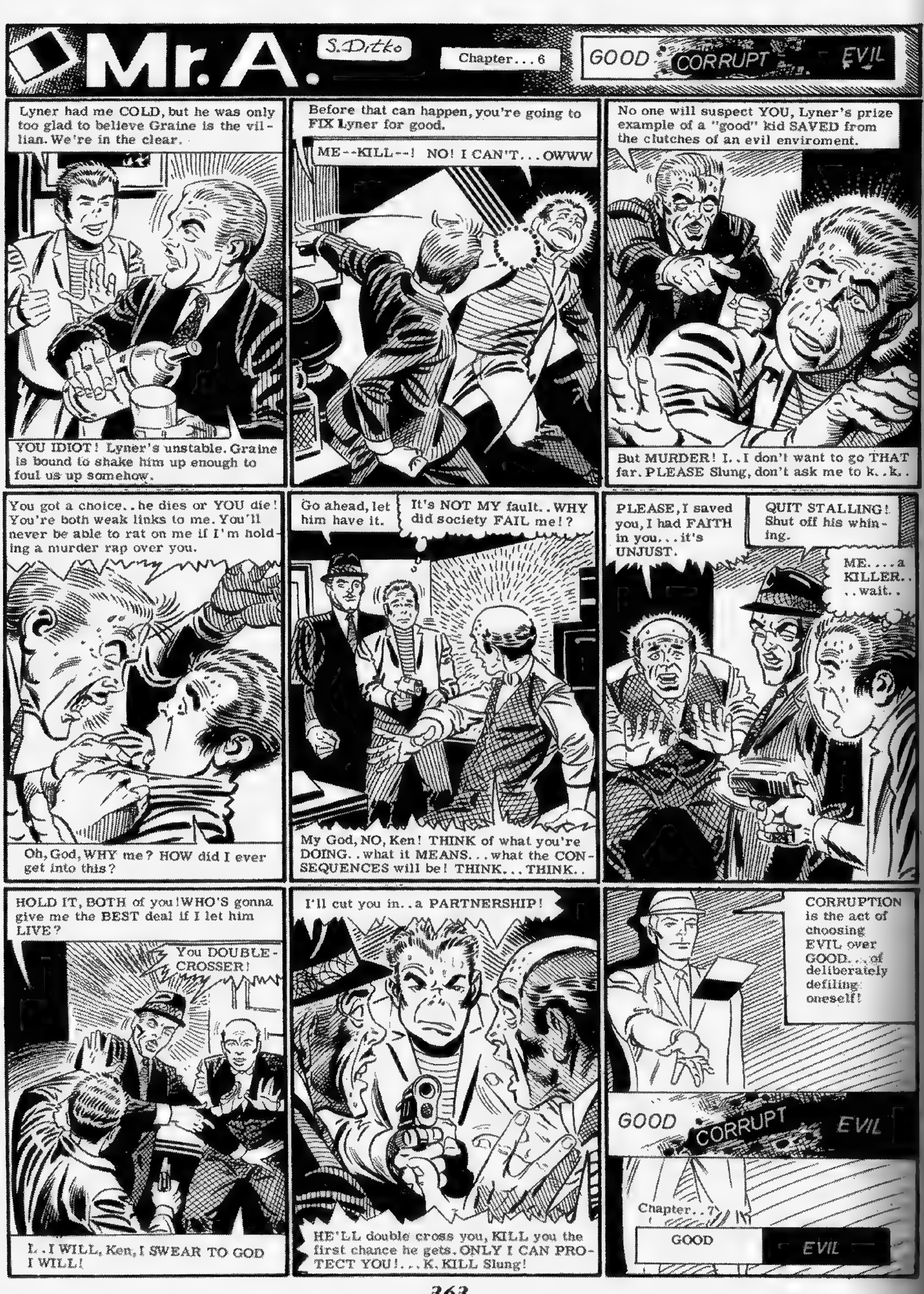

Mr. A.
Rex Graine, as a man, a reporter and as MR. A., avenges the victims of injustice.
CHAPTER 1.
JUSTICE
MERCY
COPYRIGHT © 1972 STEVE DITKO
A stolen car. . .a hit and run add up to. . .
a VICTIM. . .
. . .and the GUILTY.
I'll be in the clear if I can get away without being recognized.
STOP HIM! Let me through.
. . .Not our concern.
He's RUDE!
They all saw the hit but only one person let himself know and judge what he saw.
Is he the one?
He's young.
. . err. . ah. . gee. . I. . . I. . I dunno. .
Why ask me?
Must we tell?
They don't want to uphold the truth. They'd rather evade the issue or lie.
THAT'S HIM! THAT'S THE DRIVER OF THE HIT AND RUN CAR!
Okay, Graine, now we can book him.
He wouldn't lie for me. . let me get away with what I did.
It's not Ken's fault. He's an innocent victim of his environment, of society. Don't take a heartless vengeance. . . don't give punishment. . give MERCY to one of GOD'S children.
Please, give me MERCY. What I did shouldn't be held against me.
Society has failed you but the jury and this court grant you MERCY. Forgive us for not making you a decent human being.
Yeh, I'm innocent of my crimes. Everyone else should feel guilty and take the blame for what I did.
HA!HA! They let me get away with it. They're all showing how forgiving they can be to the GUILTY. They act like it's normal not to care about JUSTICE. They don't give a care for the VICTIM, it's the GUILTY they're anxious to protect.
The cruelest INJUSTICE was caused, NOT by the GUILTY but by our DECENT citizens. When the GUILTY are NOT to be treated as GUILTY, the VICTIMS CANNOT be looked on as VICTIMS. Our loss and pain is ignored in favor of pampering and rewarding the guilty.
JUSTICE recognizes a man for what he is and treats him accordingly. MERCY treats the guilty better than he deserves, therefore the victim less than he deserves. The GUILTY cry for MERCY; the VICTIM asks for JUSTICE. MERCY can only be granted to the GUILTY at the expense of the VICTIM.
GOOD
EVIL
JUSTICE
MERCY
CHAPTER. . 2. .
EARNED
UNEARNED

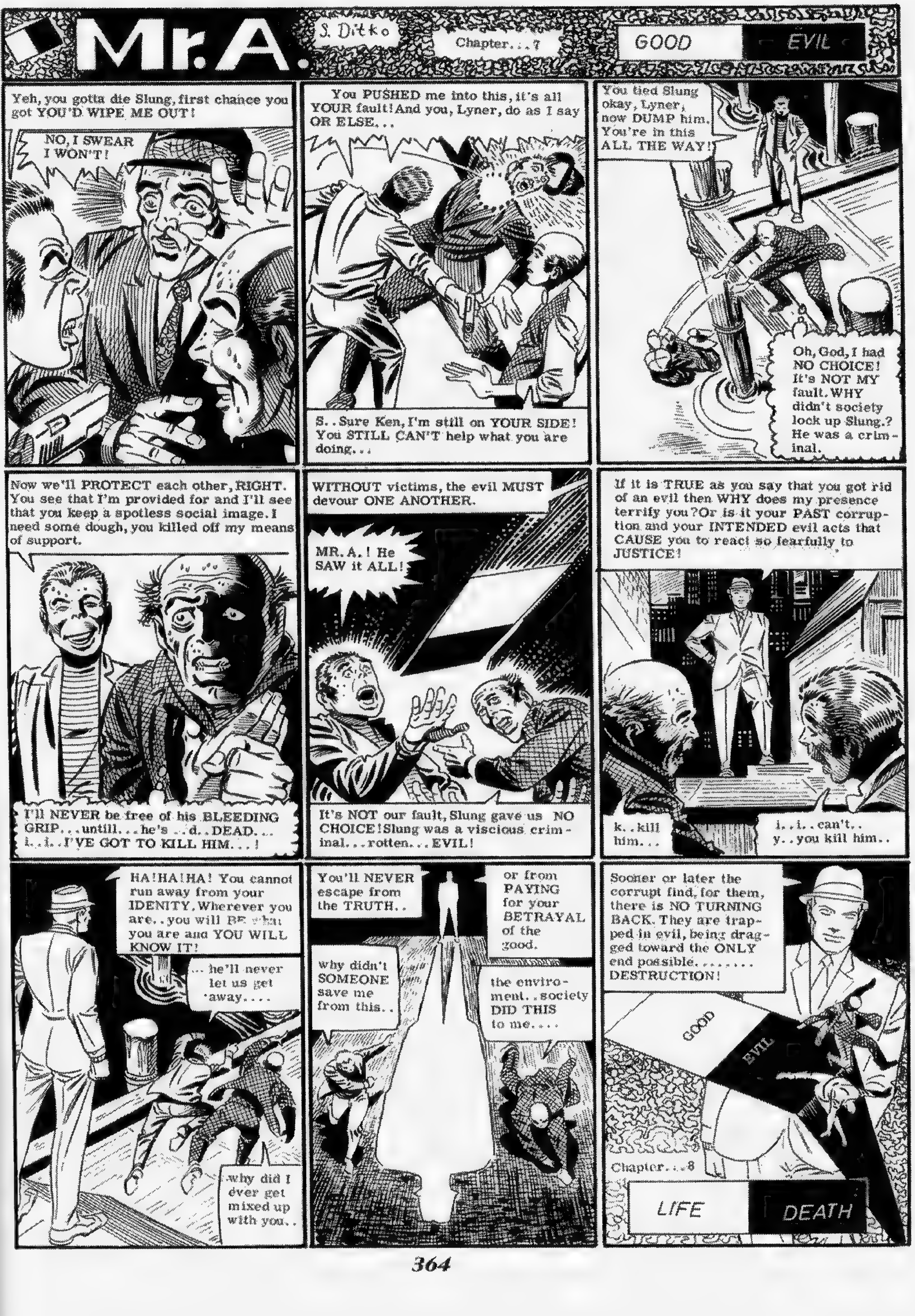

Mr. A.
by Ditko
CHAPTER..2
EARNED
UNEARNED
Earn it? Ha, only jerks work. Make others feel guilty for having earned and they'll be ashamed NOT to provide to the unearned or demand it by RIGHT.
Join my gang, Ken. We'll also get what we haven't earned only our victims will know it.
It's the moral way, making those who earn provide for someone else. It works with welfare, foreign aid, dogooder programs the world over. The The DOERS are always forced to provide the GOODS for the NON-GOOD and the NON-DOERS. Yet it is the unearned and the undeserving who set the terms.. legalized banditry.
So why be a jerk EARNER and be FORCED.. FORCED to provide to a mooching world who cries they have a right to what you earn. We'll also demand and take by force only we admit it's stealing.
Yeh, Slung, let's get our share of what others earn or own.
Besides, no one protects the honest. Too many give a little when they have to and grab as much as they can as often as they can any way they can. The honest don't demand more than they've earned. The rest of us choose to be economic vampires, existing only by feeding on the earned.
You can EARN it, Graine, by staying out of my business.
UNEARNED money is a bad business, Slung.
It's not how you get it but that you have it.
To be like you is to have nothing.
You haven't earned and you don't OWN a thing that's worth anything.. your life included.
You could be earning a short life.
Ken earned his freedom. Stop being a heartless snoop.
Ken got the unearned. He's free at the expense of his victim. For that Lyner, you earned the contempt of the decent.
I got political pull. I can play dirty so lay off us.
You have been playing dirty with justice. You'll find out what you really "earned".
Whatever you claim as yours, how did you obtain it.... HONESTLY ... or DISHONESTLY by deceit and fraud?
EARNED
UNEARNED
CHAPTER...3
RIGHTS & MUTUAL CONSENT
PRIVLEGES FORCE

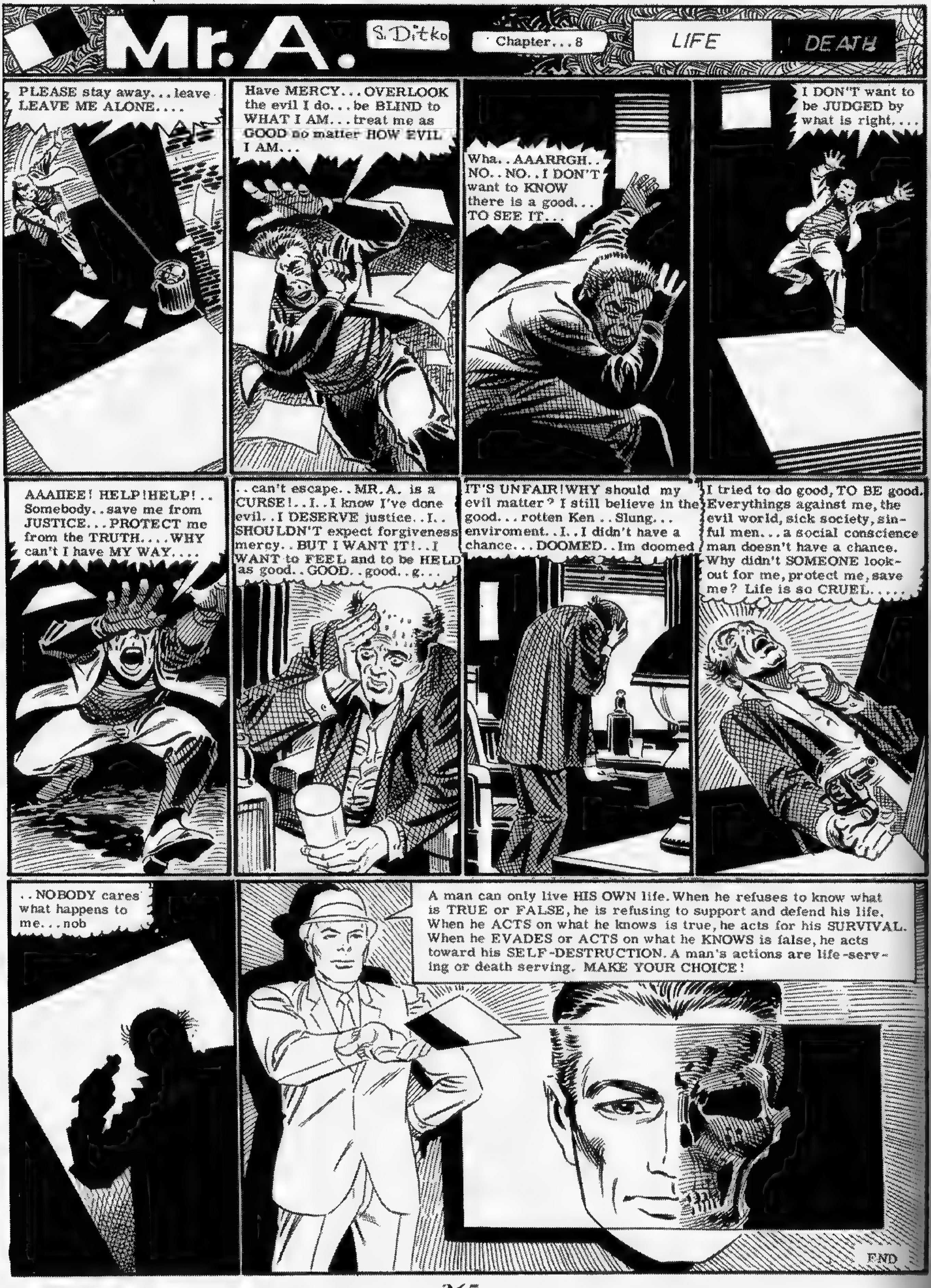

Mr.A.
by Ditko
Chapter... 3
MUTUAL CONSENT
FORCE
Who cares about your CONSENT or your RIGHTS! We're TAKING what we have NO right to take because we have the means... FORCE!
FORCE is "law" protecting the "special privileged". The NON-privileged deserve to suffer, the resisters of force deserve to be punished. It is only fair that YOUR fate be decided by the "privileged". FORCE IS RIGHT!
FORCE works for bad goverments, dictators. They pass "laws" giving certain people "RIGHTS" no one else is permitted. It doesn't work for local criminals. It is "LEGAL" only when the victim is the nation's population.
Hypocrites! It's legal to take by FORCE when it's for some phoney "good for everyone", but illegal when I want to ROB for MY OWN good. WHY? Either way the guys getting robbed don't have any choice about "giving", even if their property is going to be used against their own beliefs or good. At least I don't claim I'm ROBBING for "everyone's good".
I got RIGHTS! You got to treat me like I'm a decent human being. You want to abuse me.
I want you to get what you rightly deserve, no MORE and no LESS. Are you mixed up with Slung?
Stop FORCING your insulting questions! By what RIGHT...!
No one is forced to listen or answer. Ask Ken yourself if you're not afraid of the responsibility of learning and upholding the truth.
You can't FORCE me to give Ken any THIRD-DEGREE and I won't let you grill him.
I wouldn't force anyone to save himself. I'll help the deserving, the rest of of you are on your own.
So you're right, Graine, SO WHAT! There's no protection from FORCE especially when used by people with political pull. SPECIAL PRIVILEGES MEANS SPECIAL PROTECTION! Don't look for trouble... just report it, when and like it happened... unless it involves the "PRIVILGED"... then just FORGET IT. I'm a publisher, not a defender of the RIGHT... of hopeless causes.
ACCEPTING injustice instead of DEFENDING justice is responsible for making causes "hopeless".
DAILY
If some men have MORE "rights", other men must have LESS and MUTUAL CONSENT is not required in dealings between men. Then there is no limit to the demands and the suffering that the "more" will FORCE on the "less" as their "privileged RIGHT.
MUTUAL CONSENT
FORCE
Chapter... 4
INITIATION OF FORCE
RETALIATION TO FORCE


Mr. A.
Ditko
Chapter...4
INITIATION OF FORCE
RETALIATION TO FORCE
We're TAKING over the country, SILENCE all who RESIST.
Confiscate private property, wealth. They stole it from those who never owned anything. Whatever belonged to someone in particular now belongs to everybody, to no one in particular.
Dictatorship, recognized by FREE world, now a U. N. member, pledges to join in struggle for human rights and freedom for all mankind.
Humanitarians claim; internal affairs of dictatorships a private matter, opponents of dictator are "war-mongers", defenders of individual rights are a threat to world peace.
Your property RIGHTFULLY belongs to us.
STOP!
Go to HELL, FASCIST PIG!
It's UNFAIR! "Innocent" VIOLATORS of other's rights and "harmless" INITIATORS of FORCE are the "victims of BRUTALITY and VIOLENCE by the country's legally liscensed law enforcement agency, the POLICE.
The police have NO "right" to do their sworn duty to uphold the laws of the land, but any man has the "RIGHT" to break laws without being treated like a lawbreaker.
Hold him! You talked to Graine. The only way to make a guy stay in line when he thinks he's FREE to act on his own without someones PERMISSION... lay down the "law", USE FORCE!
LET ME GO! I got my RIGHTS!
You ASKED for this violence. FORCE decides rights. It GIVES them and it TAKES them away.
The INITIATORS of FORCE are the only ones who ASK for and DESERVE violence.
You invite retaliation by your starting the use of FORCE, you're answered by your own chosen method of PERSUASION.
NO force, NO retaliation. Refuse to deal by consent and you wind up with violence. Force is NOT a right, self-defense IS.
I'm still in the clear. You can't pin anything on me.
I don't have to, you'll do it to yourself by continuing your corrupt policies.
INITIATORS of FORCE have abandoned their minds, reason and rights. Since they choose to act like wild beasts, they should be treated like beasts.
INITIATION OF FORCE
RETALIATION TO FORCE
Chapter...5
SEEKING THE TRUTH
EVASION

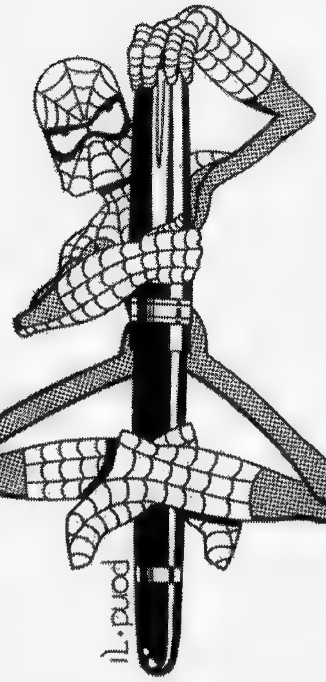

Mr. A.
Ditko
Chapter... 5
SEEKING THE TRUTH
EVASION
Ken, you LIED to me. These watches I found in your room were STOLEN!
NO! I SWEAR it! GRAINE... HE PLANTED them to FRAME me.
I wouldn't lie to the only man who's been good to me. You know Graines out to get me... and YOU. He's JEALOUS of your social prestige and HATES your decency and compassion. If he can turn you against me, HE'S FIXED BOTH OF US.
But would Graine stoop to a frame?
WHY NOT! Is Graine ALL pure, me and you ALL rotten? You didn't believe his testimony at my trial or his views on your humanitarian efforts, how can now believe he's not capable of playing dirty, of doing ANYTHING to get the UPPER-HAND over YOU. And could YOU expect any MERCY from Graine?
Graine IS heartless! He always makes me feel UNCLEAN for helping society's victims. Who WOULD help me if Graine..
I CAN'T be wrong about Ken's basic good. He wouldn't betray my trust but Graine is without pity. He wants to see me.. US suffer... so he's capable of anything. Graine's kind are the cause of society's inhumanity. He MUST NOT be allowed to poison my feelings and weaken my faith.
Graine's tactics won't turn me against you, Ken, just keep on being a good boy.
That weasling, self-blinding FOOL won't allow himself to face up to the REAL truth about me, Graine, society or himself. He closes his mind to everything that threatens his illusions. My word becomes his proof, his truth. It enables him to escape facing up to whether it's true that I stole. But he has to blindly accept Graines guilt and my innocence, to denounce him and praise me on FAITH.
There's proof Ken's mixed up with Sl..
OH, GOD, SHUT UP! I WON'T believe your trumped-up "proof" and smears. You... YOU FIEND
HAVE PITY! STOP PERSECUTING !... LEAVE EVERYTHING BE.. DON'T LOOK FOR FLAWS.. DON'T CONDEMN. WHY CAN'T YOU FORGIVE.. HELP.. WHY MUST YOU INSIST ON PROVING ANYTHING?.. IT CAN ONLY HURT...
Are you pleading for YOU or Ken? Saving begins when you face up to the truth, NO EVASIONS, then acting accordingly.
I.. I.. WE'VE done NO wrong. WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT? If society is good.. EVERYONE will be good. Society IS to blame, it's BAD.
..if an enviroment is good.. people will be good.. but first we need a good enviroment...
HOW does a society that is just a collection of individuals GET to be bad? HOW does a society GET the power to make you KNOW and ACCEPT the truth, to KNOW and REJECT lies?
REFUSING to see or to know the truth does not make the truth non-existent. You cannot prevent a disaster by refusing to identify the signs of danger. YOU ONLY INVITE DESTRUCTION.
SEEKING THE TRUTH
EVASION
Chapter .. 6
GOOD
CORRUPTION
EVIL


Mr. A.
S. Ditko
Chapter...6
GOOD CORRUPT EVIL
Lyner had me COLD, but he was only too glad to believe Graine is the villian. We're in the clear.
YOU IDIOT! Lyner's unstable. Graine is bound to shake him up enough to foul us up somehow.
Before that can happen, you're going to FIX Lyner for good.
ME--KILL--! NO! I CAN'T...OWWW
No one will suspect YOU, Lyner's prize example of a "good" kid SAVED from the clutches of an evil enviroment.
But MURDER! I..I don't want to go THAT far. PLEASE Slung, don't ask me to k..k..
You got a choice..he dies or YOU die! You're both weak links to me. You'll never be able to rat on me if I'm holding a murder rap over you.
Oh, God, WHY me? HOW did I ever get into this?
Go ahead, let him have it.
It's NOT MY fault..WHY did society FAIL me!?
My God, NO, Ken! THINK of what you're DOING..what it MEANS...what the CONSEQUENCES will be! THINK...THINK..
PLEASE, I saved you, I had FAITH in you...it's UNJUST.
QUIT STALLING! Shut off his whining.
ME....a KILLER.. ..wait..
HOLD IT, BOTH of you! WHO'S gonna give me the BEST deal if I let him LIVE?
You DOUBLE-CROSSER!
I..I WILL, Ken, I SWEAR TO GOD I WILL!
I'll cut you in..a PARTNERSHIP!
HE'LL double cross you, KILL you the first chance he gets. ONLY I CAN PROTECT YOU!...K. KILL Slung!
CORRUPTION is the act of choosing EVIL over GOOD...of deliberately defiling oneself!
GOOD CORRUPT EVIL
Chapter..7
GOOD EVIL


Mr. A.
S. Ditko
Chapter...7
GOOD
EVIL
Yeh, you gotta die Slung, first chance you got YOU'D WIPE ME OUT!
NO, I SWEAR I WON'T!
You PUSHED me into this, it's all YOUR fault! And you, Lyner, do as I say OR ELSE...
S..Sure Ken, I'm still on YOUR SIDE! You STILL CAN'T help what you are doing...
You tied Slung okay, Lyner, now DUMP him. You're in this ALL THE WAY!
Oh, God, I had NO CHOICE! It's NOT MY fault. WHY didn't society lock up Slung.? He was a criminal.
Now we'll PROTECT each other, RIGHT. You see that I'm provided for and I'll see that you keep a spotless social image. I need some dough, you killed off my means of support.
I'll NEVER be free of his BLEEDING GRIP...untill...he's ..d..DEAD... i..i..I'VE GOT TO KILL HIM...!
WITHOUT victims, the evil MUST devour ONE ANOTHER.
MR. A.! He SAW it ALL!
It's NOT our fault, Slung gave us NO CHOICE! Slung was a viscious criminal...rotten...EVIL!
If it is TRUE as you say that you got rid of an evil then WHY does my presence terrify you? Or is it your PAST corruption and your INTENDED evil acts that CAUSE you to react so fearfully to JUSTICE!
k..kill him...
i..i..can't.. y..you kill him..
HA!HA!HA! You cannot run away from your IDENITY. Wherever you are..you will BE what you are and YOU WILL KNOW IT!
...he'll never let us get away....
why did I ever get mixed up with you..
You'll NEVER escape from the TRUTH..
or from PAYING for your BETRAYAL of the good.
why didn't SOMEONE save me from this..
the enviroment..society DID THIS to me....
Sooner or later the corrupt find, for them, there is NO TURNING BACK. They are trapped in evil, being dragged toward the ONLY end possible........ DESTRUCTION!
GOOD
EVIL
Chapter...8
LIFE
DEATH


Mr. A.
S. Ditko
Chapter...8
LIFE
DEATH
PLEASE stay away...leave LEAVE ME ALONE....
Have MERCY...OVERLOOK the evil I do...be BLIND to WHAT I AM...treat me as GOOD no matter HOW EVIL I AM...
Wha..AAARRGH..NO..NO..I DON'T want to KNOW there is a good...TO SEE IT...
I DON'"T want to be JUDGED by what is right,...
AAAIIEE! HELP!HELP!..Somebody..save me from JUSTICE...PROTECT me from the TRUTH....WHY can't I have MY WAY....
..can't escape..MR.A. is a CURSE!..I..I know I've done evil..I DESERVE justice..I..SHOULDN'T expect forgiveness mercy..BUT I WANT IT!..I WANT to FEEL and to be HELD as good..GOOD..good..g...
IT'S UNFAIR!WHY should my evil matter? I still believe in the good...rotten Ken..Slung...enviroment..I..I didn't have a chance...DOOMED..Im doomed
I tried to do good, TO BE good. Everythings against me, the evil world, sick society, sinful men...a social conscience man doesn't have a chance. Why didn't SOMEONE look-out for me, protect me, save me? Life is so CRUEL.....
..NOBODY cares what happens to me...nob
A man can only live HIS OWN life. When he refuses to know what is TRUE or FALSE, he is refusing to support and defend his life. When he ACTS on what he knows is true, he acts for his SURVIVAL. When he EVADES or ACTS on what he KNOWS is false, he acts toward his SELF-DESTRUCTION. A man's actions are life-serving or death serving. MAKE YOUR CHOICE!
END

From the Circular File



JAMES BRANDON
Rt. #2
Hector, Ark. 72461

At first I didn't like the cover of Comic Crusader #12, but the more I looked at it the better it looked. It was really appropriate for the issue. The inside front cover was liked the first time I saw it. Dave Cockrum is a fantastic artist. The art on the editorial page, by Stillwell, may have been the best in the whole issue. More fantastic art from Jim Steranko. Boy, he draws fine looking women! Tom Fagan's article was very well received. Your illoes were very good, too. I have yet to read an article by Fagan that I haven't liked, but this is the best he has written since Airboy. I don't usually like satiracal strips, but "Nolan" had me howling before I got half way through. Dennis's art was superb. I liked the outfit he gave to Cookie. Wrightson's art was only fair. It didn't seem as good as some of his other work. The only thing the matter with "Conan" by Tony Isabella was that he made Conan act more like a child than a man. "A Happy Accident" by Bob Cosgrove was good if you were a really big Tarzan fan. I'm not! I think ERB's best creation is John Carter. I didn't like Foreign Fan-Fare. The reason is because I don't know anything about the artist mentioned. I think if you put a lot of the artists work in the article, it would help. I read your article on The Eclipse in Issue 6, but he didn't sound all that great and I don't like Foss' recent work, so I didn't think I would like the story. Boy was I wrong! His art was better than it is on his other character Excel. The art didn't look quite as rushed as it usually does. The story was superb. I wish he would concentrate more on Eclipse than Excel. Foss uses Excel to show the fans his views about the world. Unfortunately, this takes away from the entertainment. Try to get more stories about Eclipse. Maybe as a regular strip to alternate with The Defender. I didn't care for the Buscema - Sinnott art. I'm glad to see the letter column back to normal. The back cover was only fair. I don't like Gar's style.

I HAVE TO AGREE WITH YOU ON YOUR OPINION OF JOHN CARTER! HE'S MY FAVORITE ERB CHARACTER TOO! YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE ARTIST FEATURED IN FOREIGN FAN-FARE? DID YOU READ THE ARTICLE? THE PURPOSE OF FFF IS TO GIVE READERS INFO ON THE TREMENDOUS TALENT OF THE FOREIGN ARTISTS. THE ART PRINTED WAS VERY REPRESENTATIVE OF CARLOS GIMENEZ'S WORK. I'D LOVE TO HAVE MORE ECLIPSE STORIES, BUT RONN ISN'T TOO WILD ABOUT DOING LONG UNDERWEAR CHARACTERS, AS HE CALLS THEM. JIM GARRISON WAS THE BACK COVER ARTIST LAST ISSUE. MOST OF THE FANS WHO WROTE IN LIKED HIS RATHER DIFFERENT STYLE.

DAVID DONOVAN
1704 Terrace Drive
Carroll, Iowa. 51401

Comic Crusader #12 was B-A-D, especially The Eclipse! Maybe some people like that perverted crap, but not me! One thing really puzzled me, though. That article by Tom Fagan -- What's this about his "yet unsolved disappearance?" I've never heard anything about it!

DRAT! BECAUSE OF YOU, I LOST A BET I HAD WITH TOM. HE SAID SOME FAN WAS BOUND TO WRITE IN, NOT KNOWING HE WAS COMBINING A "FICTION PIECE" WITH A FACTUAL ARTICLE, AND ASK ABOUT HIS MYSTERIOUS DISSAPEARANCE. I SAID "NO" NO ONE COULD BE THAT NAIVE. OH WELL, YOU WIN SOME - YOU LOSE SOME!

LAURINE WHITE
5408 Leader Ave.
Sacramento, Calif. 95841

I didn't think you could top issue #11, but you sure tried. The picture by Stillwell is the best by him I've seen so far. Elric is the only recognizable character in it. The Steranko is magnificent! Tom Fagan's article is much more informative than the one in All In Color For A Dime about the Lost World. Your illustrations were very good, but the one with Hunt, Lyssa and the Volta soldiers would have been better without Lyssa bouncing through the picture. Fujitake's strip on "Nolan" was really cute. The artwork for Conan and the Burroughs article was good. I almost thought Hogarth did that Tarzan. Thank you for including the comics in Spanish; I never can read the French ones in Phenix. Eclipse wasn't as good as the rest of the contents.

MANY OF THE THINGS PRINTED IN "ALL IN COLOR FOR A DIME" ARE INACCURATE. BOTH TOM AND I PUT A LOT OF TIME AND MONEY INTO RESEARCHING THAT ARTICLE! LYSSA WASN'T BOUNCING - SHE WAS TURNING TO FLEE FROM THE VOLTA SOLDIER CLUTCHING AT HER.

JAMES HANLEY
167 Myrtle Ave
Richmond, N.Y. 10310

I just got Comic Crusader #12. Artistically it is much improved from the last issue, and that issue was really superb! Offbeat is the only word to describe Tom Fagan's Lost World piece. "Nolan" suffers by comparison with National Lampoon's recent "Norman." It does touch on some nice points. The gay Djin really psyched me. Isabella's article was, as always, good and eminently readable. I would have prefered to see him do a Wandering Fan article though. "A Happy Accident" was good, even if it did rehash a lot of articles I've seen before. The Eclipse was actually totally new to me. The concept is sound, but Foss' art leaves something to be desired. The Thorne interview was far too short. The Foreign article read nicely, but was not my cup of tea. I can't get involved with an artist on the basis of six illustrations.

I CAN'T COMMENT ON "NORMAN" SINCE I HAVEN'T SEEN THE PIECE. A WANDERING FAN ARTICLE WOULD HAVE BEEN OUT OF PLACE IN ISSUE #12. THE THORNE INTERVIEW MAY HAVE BEEN SHORT, BUT IT WAS LONG ON INFORMATION.

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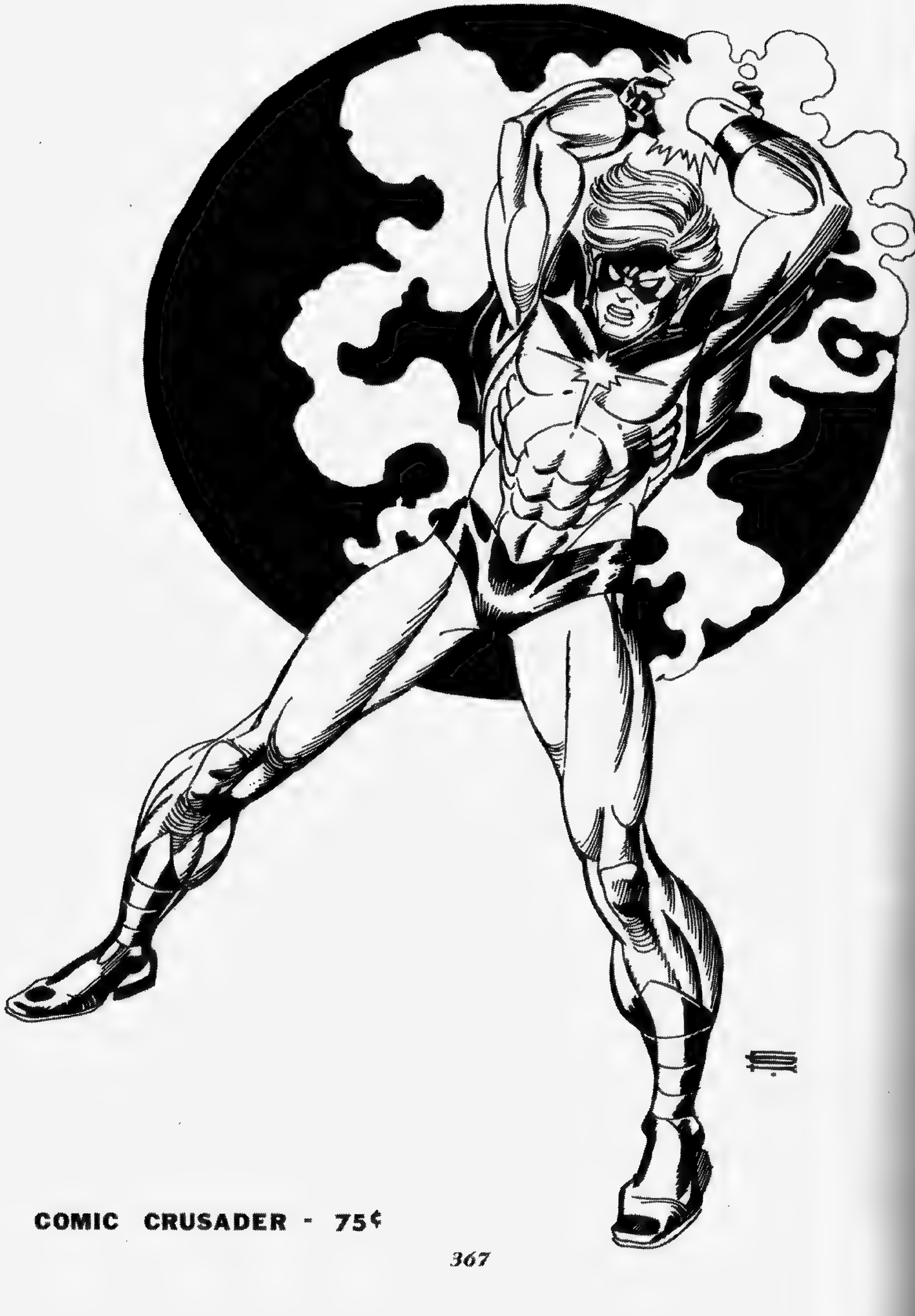
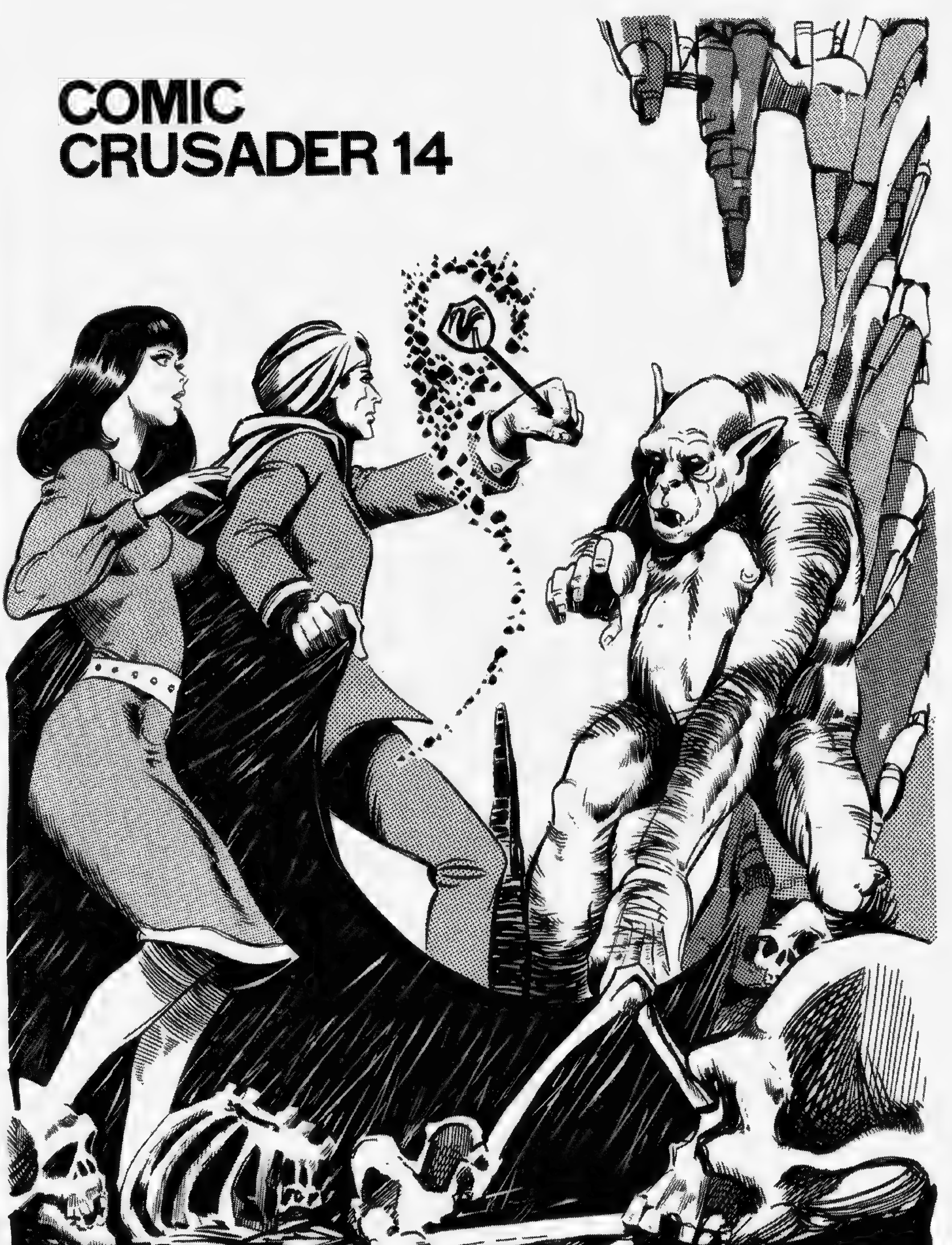


COMIC CRUSADER - 75¢

COMIC CRUSADER 14


FUJITAKE/BLACK

CRUSADER COMMENTS

BEHOLD THE WORLD OF MAGIC!

This is the theme that motivates the 14th issue of COMIC CRUSADER!

For the first time, and I hope not the last, we have RAYMOND MILLER with us. Ray has undertaken the monumental task of documenting the history of Fawcett Publication's man of magic...IBIS the INVINCIBLE. To illustrate this fine article, some of the finest artists in fandom have submitted their work for your approval...Don Newton, Keith Fukumitsu, Gary Kato, myself and Dennis Fujitake. Dennis also took time out from a busy schedule to do this issue's cover, which Bill Black inked. My thanks to all of them.

Speaking of covers, this issues back cover came about as a result of my reacquaintance with two of the nicest people in or out of fandom... Richard and Wendy Pini. Wendy, as many of you may know, is the former Wendy Fletcher and I'm very pleased to present her fine work here in Comic Crusader. Wendy is also a special favorite of my daughter Jolene. After she and Richard last paid us a visit Jolene walked around for days saying, "Wendy, Wendy, Wendy."

In this issues interview with Mandrake the Magician's artist, FRED FREDERICKS, you will find some art by a new addition to the Comic Crusader staff. His name is Tom Armstrong. Tom is a devotee of the graphic media and I'm sure you'll be seeing a lot more of his work. Hopefully in C.C.!

Recently TOM FAGAN introduced me to a series that just overwhelmed me. Without a doubt, the Mr. Mystic series has to be one of the most beautifully written and drawn series ever produced. Tom has done what I consider one of the best articles ever on a certain phase of the Mr. Mystic adventures. This article is an outstanding piece of work on Tom's part and I really enjoyed illustrating it!

A while back, some of you may have heard that STEVE DITKO was once again creating something for D.C. Plans fell through at National, but Steve went ahead with his idea anyway. The result is Part 1 of this issue's Steve Ditko "H" series. Steve's hero believes that you don't have to wear the same costume all the time to be effective...rather, a certain kind of costume for a certain kind of job. I'm really pleased to be featuring the initial episodes here.

BOB COSGROVE's work speaks for itself and in this issue it speaks quite well! Bob returned home from college long enough to turn out two fine pieces. One on Black Magic and the other on "The Art Of Pencilling." His pencilling article is an introduction to this issue's special pencil page treat...Two pages of fantastic work by JACK KIRBY and a beautiful rendering by JIM STERANKO!

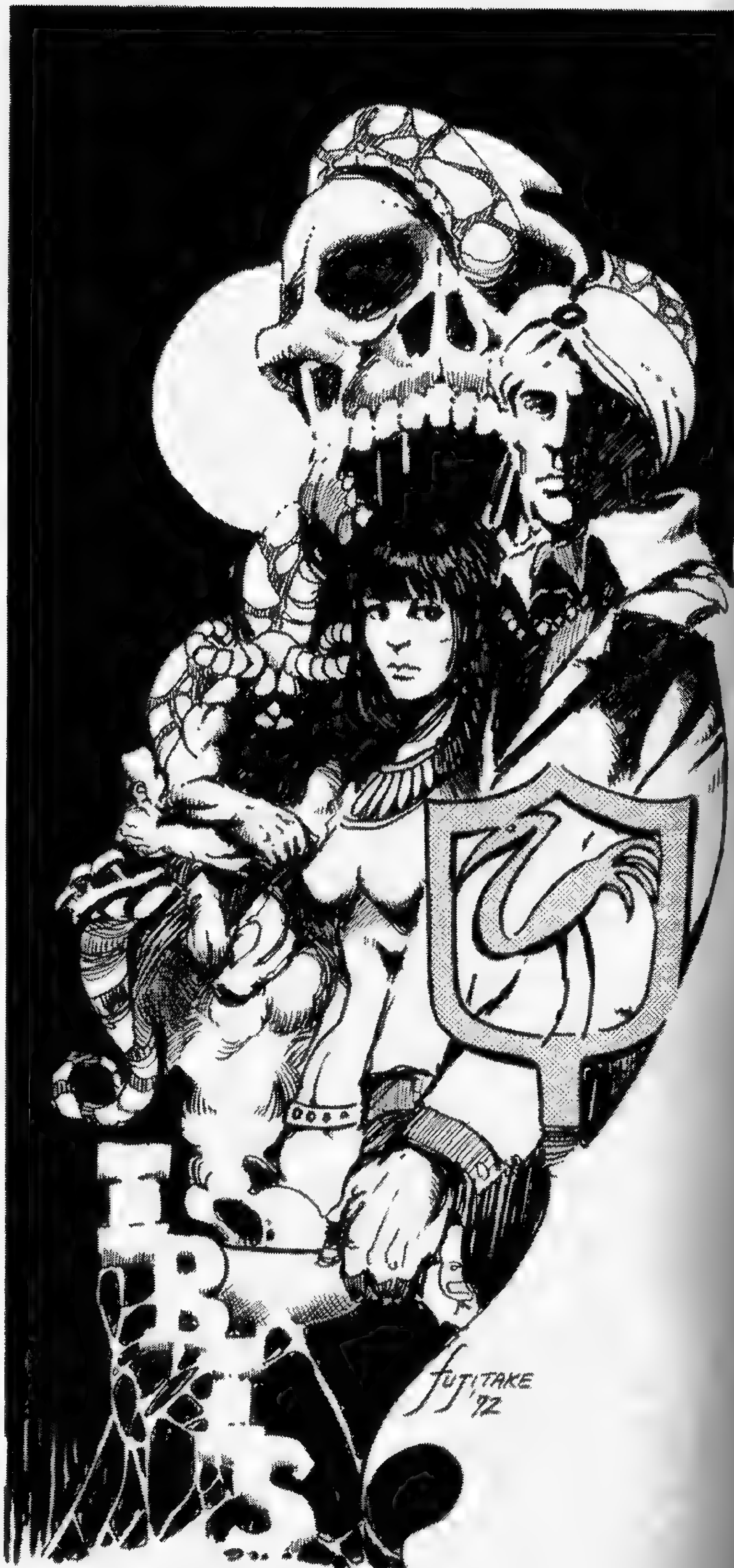
Put an Anthony Kowalik, Comic Chatter logo, and art by Fred Fredericks, Wayne Pond, and Bruce Patterson together and you have the rest of this magic oriented issue.

Magic has been around in comics since 1934, when Mandrake the Magician was created by Lee Falk. Since then magicians have roamed throughout comics from Balbo, the Boy Magician to Zatara. This issue is dedicated to them!

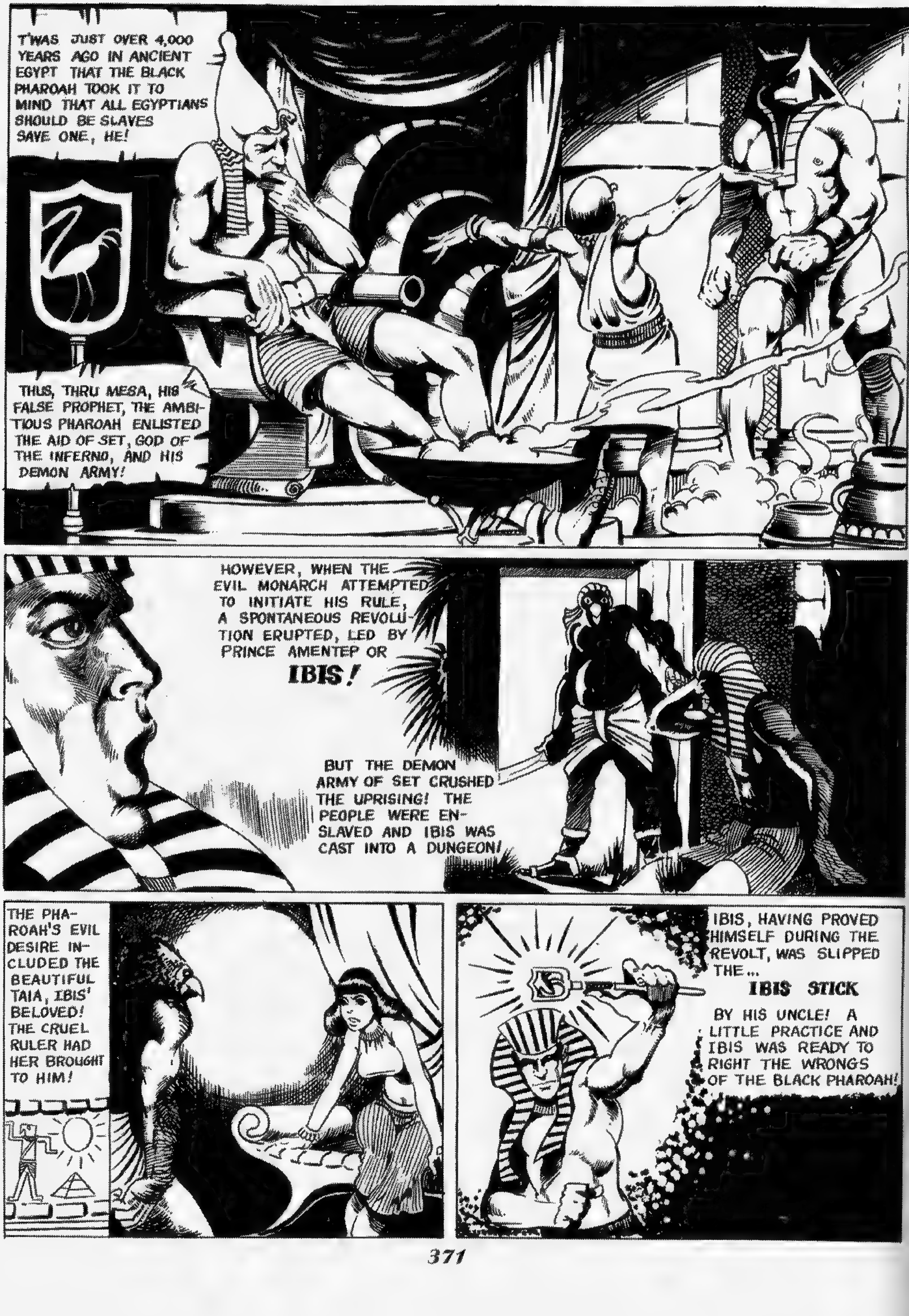
Hope you enjoy the issue.

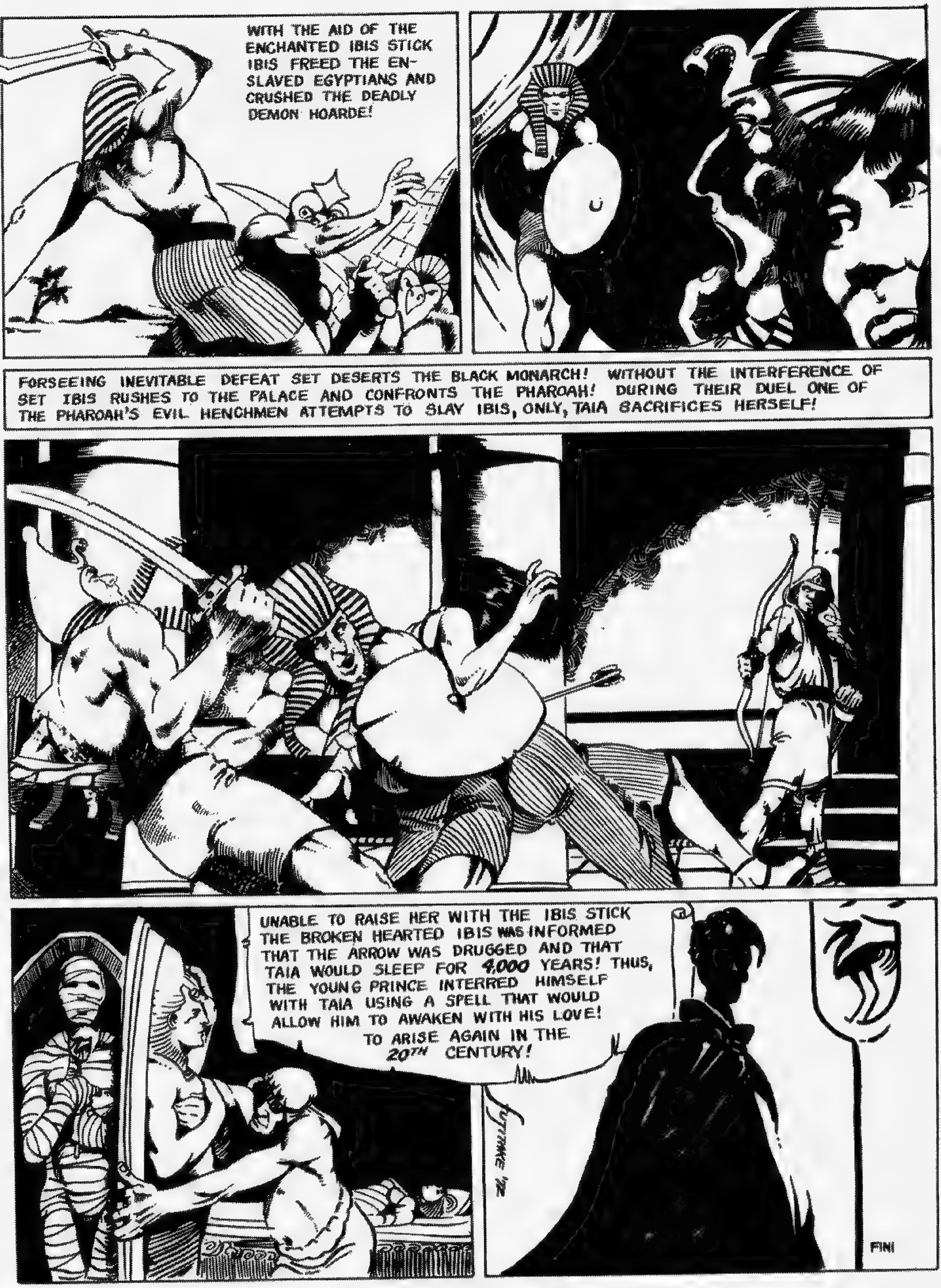
Best -

Martin L. Greim



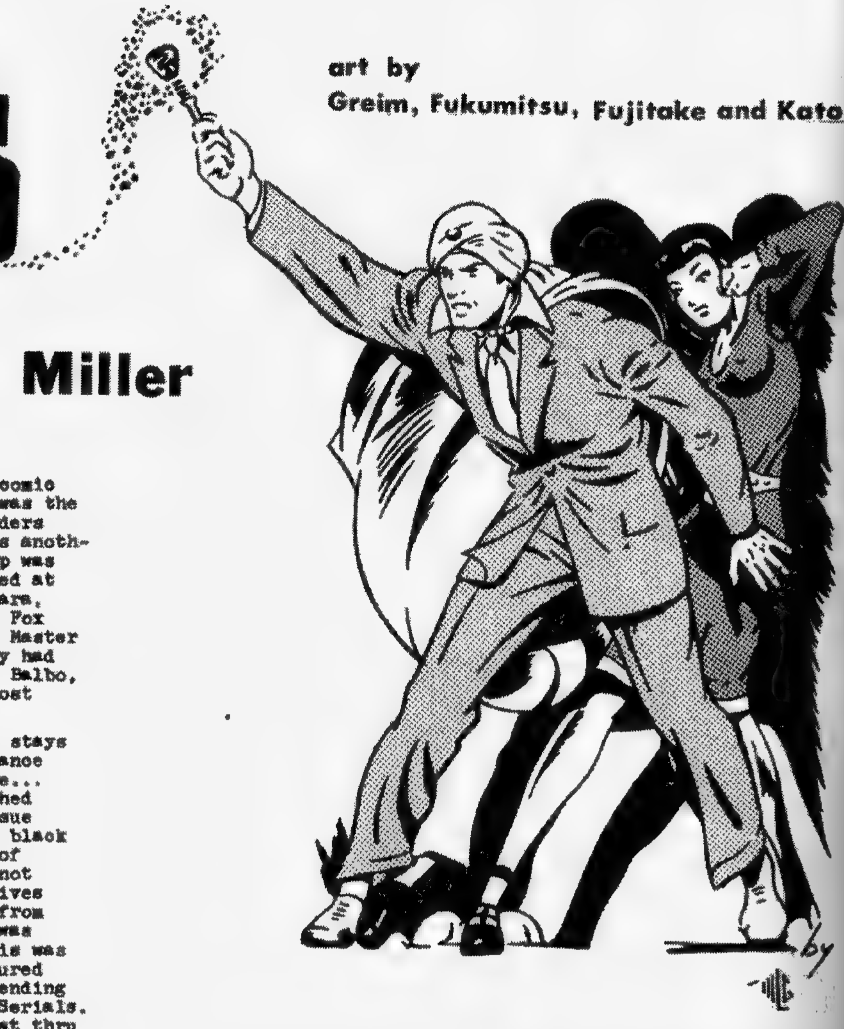
NEWTON


T'WAS JUST OVER 4,000 YEARS AGO IN ANCIENT EGYPT THAT THE BLACK PHAROAH TOOK IT TO MIND THAT ALL EGYPTIANS SHOULD BE SLAVES SAVE ONE, HE!
THUS, THRU MESA, HIS FALSE PROPHET, THE AMBITIOUS PHAROAH ENLISTED THE AID OF SET, GOD OF THE INFERNO, AND HIS DEMON ARMY!
HOWEVER, WHEN THE EVIL MONARCH ATTEMPTED TO INITIATE HIS RULE, A SPONTANEOUS REVOLUTION ERUPTED, LED BY PRINCE AMENTEP OR IBIS!
BUT THE DEMON ARMY OF SET CRUSHED THE UPRISING! THE PEOPLE WERE ENSLAVED AND IBIS WAS CAST INTO A DUNGEON!
THE PHAROAH'S EVIL DESIRE INCLUDED THE BEAUTIFUL TAIA, IBIS' BELOVED! THE CRUEL RULER HAD HER BROUGHT TO HIM!
IBIS, HAVING PROVED HIMSELF DURING THE REVOLT, WAS SLIPPED THE... IBIS STICK BY HIS UNCLE! A LITTLE PRACTICE AND IBIS WAS READY TO RIGHT THE WRONGS OF THE BLACK PHAROAH!


WITH THE AID OF THE ENCHANTED IBIS STICK IBIS FREED THE ENSLAVED EGYPTIANS AND CRUSHED THE DEADLY DEMON HOARDE!
FORSEEING INEVITABLE DEFEAT SET DESERTS THE BLACK MONARCH! WITHOUT THE INTERFERENCE OF SET IBIS RUSHES TO THE PALACE AND CONFRONTS THE PHAROAH! DURING THEIR DUEL ONE OF THE PHAROAH'S EVIL HENCHMEN ATTEMPTS TO SLAY IBIS, ONLY, TAIA SACRIFICES HERSELF!
UNABLE TO RAISE HER WITH THE IBIS STICK THE BROKEN HEARTED IBIS WAS INFORMED THAT THE ARROW WAS DRUGGED AND THAT TAIA WOULD SLEEP FOR 4,000 YEARS! THUS, THE YOUNG PRINCE INTERRED HIMSELF WITH TAIA USING A SPELL THAT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO AWAKEN WITH HIS LOVE! TO ARISE AGAIN IN THE 20TH CENTURY!
FINI

IBIS

art by
Greim, Fukumitsu, Fujitake and Kato



by
Raymond Miller

As everyone knows, the most popular type of comic book character of the late 30's and early 40's was the super or costume hero. But how many of our readers are aware that during this same period there was another very popular group of characters? This group was the Magicians, and almost every publisher carried at least one on their roster of stars. DC had Zatara, Sargon and Lando. MLJ had Zambini and Kardak. Fox had Zanzibar and Yarko. Timely went with Dakor Master Magician, Merzak the Mystic and Monako. Quality had Merlin and Tor the Magic Master and Fawcett had Balbo, El Carim (Miracle spelled backwards), and the most famous of all - PRINCE IBIS the INVINCIBLE.

Ibis made his debut, along with other Whiz main stays Captain Marvel, Spy Smasher, Golden Arrow and Lance O'Casey, in Whiz Comics #1, Feb. 1940. (Ed.Note... Actually, even though this was the first published issue of Whiz, its number was #2. The first issue never saw sale on the stands. That issue was a black and white "ashcan" issue, used for the purpose of securing copyrights. However, copyrights were not secured with this issue, because Fawcett executives decided to change the name of the lead feature from Capt. Thunder to Capt. Marvel and the #1 issue was junked. A second issue was then readied and this was numbered #2.) Ibis, like Spy Smasher, was featured in one long continuous serial, with each story ending in a cliff hanger like the old Hollywood Movie Serials. In Ibis' case, the continued stories were to last thru Whiz #26.

There really wasn't much of an origin in the first Ibis story. The reader would find the story starting with the mummy of Ibis awaking in an American museum where, with the Ibistick, he begins a search for Taia. Before we go any further with the story, let us jump ahead more than two years to the first issue of Ibis Comics, 1942 for the complete origin.

Ibis had his beginning in ancient Egypt, 4,000 years ago. Prince Ibis, also known as Prince AMENTEP, had been taught much wisdom by his uncle, Osiris, God of Justice and he longed for the power his uncle promised him so he could not only do good for the people, but be worthy of his loved one...The Princess Taia. However, Osiris tells Ibis the power could not be his until he had proven himself in a crisis. Meanwhile, the cruel Black Pharoah also had eyes for the lovely Princess Taia. The Black Pharoah had just inherited the crown of Egypt and had planned to put an end to freedom the Egyptians had been having. With the aid of his Chief Advisor MESU, the Evil Dwellers of the Depths (evil Gods with heads of animals) led by SET, the Master of Inferno, were summoned to help him enslave the Egyptians and win Taia for himself. The Black Pharoah then summoned all the men before him, and told the Egyptians in so many words, that freedom was over for them and that their first task was to build him the greatest pyramid of all time and let no one stand against him. Prince Ibis led the Egyptians in a revolt, but found they were no match for Set and his Dwellers of the Depths. The rebels are felled by a rain of arrows and Ibis is left alone. He is soon subdued and thrown into a dungeon. With no leader, the Egyptians are slaves of the Black Pharoah and start work on the great pyramid. At the same time, Taia is dragged to the Pharoah's quarters. Meanwhile a very weak Ibis lies in his dungeon prison. But unnoticed by the prison guards, Osiris appears at the window of Ibis' cell and tells him he has proven his courage and the power is now his...The Power of the Ibistick! The Ibistick, which was the source of the greatest magic ever, had but one flaw; it would not work against other magic. Ibis first commands the Ibistick to set him free, then orders it to complete the great pyramid. He then frees the slaves and they attack the Dwellers of the Depths, who being evil and cowardly cannot stand against a brave attack and vanish back to where they came from. During the revolt, Set appears before the Black Pharoah and warns him that his time is running out and that someone had learned the secret of his evil and in a puff of smoke returns to Inferno. Minutes later Ibis breaks into the Throne Room where the Black Pharoah, Mesu and Taia stand. In a sword battle Ibis slays the Pharoah and in revenge Mesu shoots an arrow at Ibis only to hit Taia who throws her body in front of Ibis and takes the arrow in her heart. Mesu in turn is quickly beheaded by Ibis' sword. Osiris arrives to find the dead Taia in Ibis' arms and to hear Ibis command the Ibistick to strike him dead. But nothing happens, since the Ibistick will do no harm to its master and Ibis learns from Osiris that in the hand of an enemy who seeks to harm him, the Ibistick will only do harm to the one who orders it. Osiris then explains to Ibis that Taia is not really dead. Mesu's arrow has only put her to sleep for 4,000 years. Upon learning this, Ibis commands the Ibistick to put him to sleep for the same length of time. We are now up to the time where the first Ibis story begins. Prince Ibis awakens in an American Museum and after the Ibistick has dressed him in modern clothes, he goes forth to locate Taia whom he finds in a museum in the land of his birth - Egypt. The origin story in Ibis #1 ends.

This complete origin tale was written by Otto Binder. Editor, Martin Greim recently talked to Mr. Binder and gleaned a bit of information about the man of magic's creation.

In 1939 Bill Parker became Fawcett's first comic book editor. He had selected several adventure themes to be used in Whiz and a magician theme was one of them. His was the original story line! However, it is Mr. Binder's belief that Ed Herron, who took Parker's place in 1940, did the most to guide the story line. Otto related a humorous anecdote regarding his re-write of Ibis' origin. Ed Herron called him in and told him they were coming out with an Ibis book and that he was to re-write the origin. When Otto asked for some information on the character, the only reply was, "Oh, it has to do with Egypt and a magician!" When asked about Taia, Otto explained that she was in the stories for window dressing - nothing more!

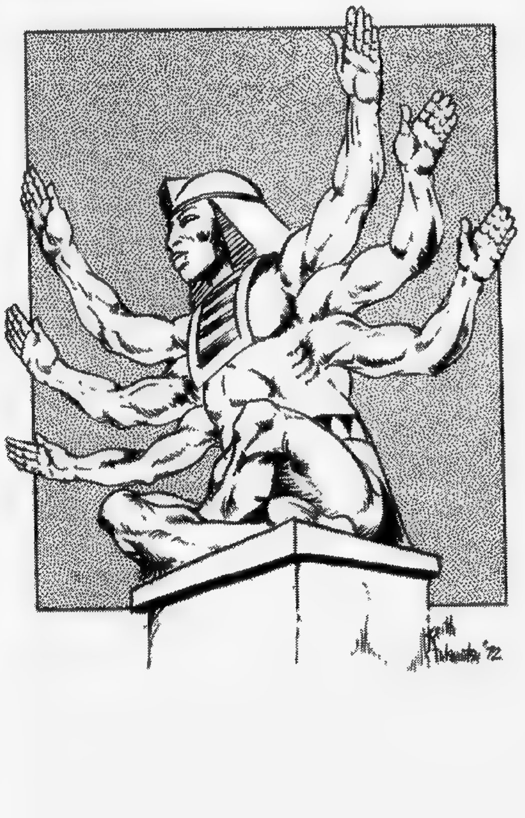
It should be noted that Ibis' origin was added to again in an issue of his own book. Now Ibis received his Ibistick from a statue of the Egyptian God THOTH. Thoth was a real Egyptian God too. He was the god of wisdom and magic.

Back to the first Whiz adventure. The story has no real organized plot. It just has Ibis doing good, like restoring a bombed out city. The story ends with a thief stealing the Ibistick and leaving Taia in a glass case. In the 2nd issue of Whiz, Ibis follows the thief and after some degree of trouble, traps him. The thief ordered the Ibistick to turn Ibis into gold, but since the Ibistick will never harm its master, the thief instead is turned to gold. Ibis then rushes back in time to save Taia from her tight glass case. In Ibis' 3rd adventure he defeats King Senwosri, who had returned to life and intended to punish the explorers who had disturbed his tomb and in #4 they go to the aid of some boys who had been mistreated and who were slaves to a bunch of crooks lead by Murder Malone. Malone captures Taia and takes her away, bound and gagged in an airplane. In the 5th story the Ibistick creates an airplane and Ibis follows them. Again, the Ibistick backfires, as Malone orders it to turn Ibis into a toad after stealing it. It is rumored that Malone is still waiting for a princess to kiss him. Next the Ibistick is accidentally dropped out of a window of an autogyro and in #6 into the hands of an old fisherman who gives it to his nephew. Before long, it falls into the hands of a hobo and the Ibistick turns him into a power mad millionaire, complete with mansion. By the time Ibis and Taia locate the hobo, he wants to be Emperor of the World. However, he is turned into a block of ice, when he orders the Ibistick to do so to Ibis.

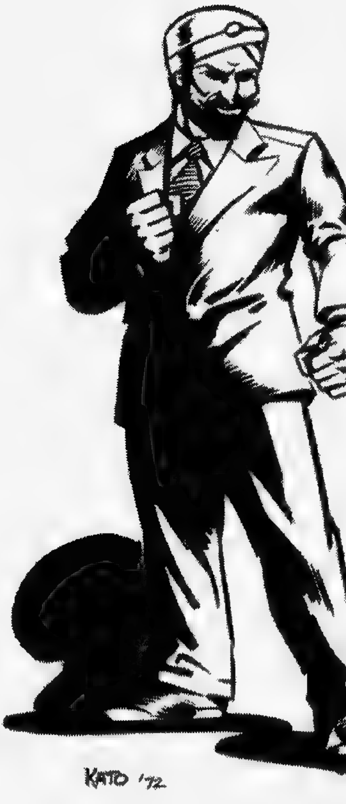
The next few issues are important, as they introduce a regular to the Ibis cast of characters. In Whiz #7 thru #13 Ibis and Taia go to a carnival where they save a young boy named Tommy and take him to Hollywood where he ends up a kidnap victim. Tommy will be in quite a few of the coming Ibis adventures. Searching for Tommy, Ibis has the Ibistick stolen by Carl Brand who is using Tommy so Ibis will sign the ownership of the Ibistick over to him. When the police and Ibis finally catch up to Brand, he convinces the police that Ibis stole the Ibistick from him and Ibis and Tommy go to jail. While they languish in jail, Brand in turn makes off with Taia. In a crystal ball Piang the Terrible sees all this and wants to use Taia to give him the secret of life. Brand refuses to turn Taia over to him and Piang kills him. However, in the end, Ibis and Tommy save Taia and Piang is defeated.

It seems the Ibistick was out of Ibis' possession more than it was in it. Ibis loses it this time to Grom Deeters, a convict who orders the Ibistick to take him to Egypt where he brings a Sphinx to life. However, in the end Ibis recovers the Ibistick and defeats the convict. Meanwhile Tommy is having troubles in a military school with Mrs. Zorn, cannibals and a professor. In the end, we find the Professor rescuing Mrs. Zorn from the Cannibals and falling in love with her. Finally, Ibis and Taia return to the Military School and to Tommy.

Thoth



Trug



In issue #13 Ibis meets TRUG, an oriental criminal who also has magic powers. Trug is the first major villain to confront Ibis and he'll plague him for a number of issues. Trug uses his magic on Tommy to steal the Ibistick and when he's confronted with Ibis, he takes Taia, the Ibistick and vanishes into the air. In issue #14 Trug and Taia end up in the far north. Using a crystal ball, Ibis is able to locate Trug's castle. As he nears the castle, Trug orders his planes to destroy Ibis, but they bomb his castle instead. As Taia drags the half dead Trug to safety, one of his men gets the Ibistick. The man becomes a giant and puts Taia and Trug in jail while he fights Ibis. Ibis defeats him and recovers the Ibistick. He then restores the giant to normal and they become friends. Ibis goes about rescuing Taia and turns Trug into a statue of marble. For the moment Trug is out of the way. Ibis' next foe is a jewel expert named Rimsan. Rimsan steals a ruby the Eskimos gave Ibis, but he recovers it with the use of the Ibistick. However, as Ibis and Taia drive off Rimsan shoots the tires and their car goes over a cliff. In issue #15 the Ibistick saves them and eventually Rimsan is killed. Returning to the north, Ibis discovers a tribe has taken Trug's statue and placed Ibis' friendly tribe in slavery. Ibis is forced to restore Trug to life and the Eskimos think Trug is a god. They change their minds when Ibis battles Trug and defeats him. After this, the two tribes become friends and Trug swears vengence on Ibis.

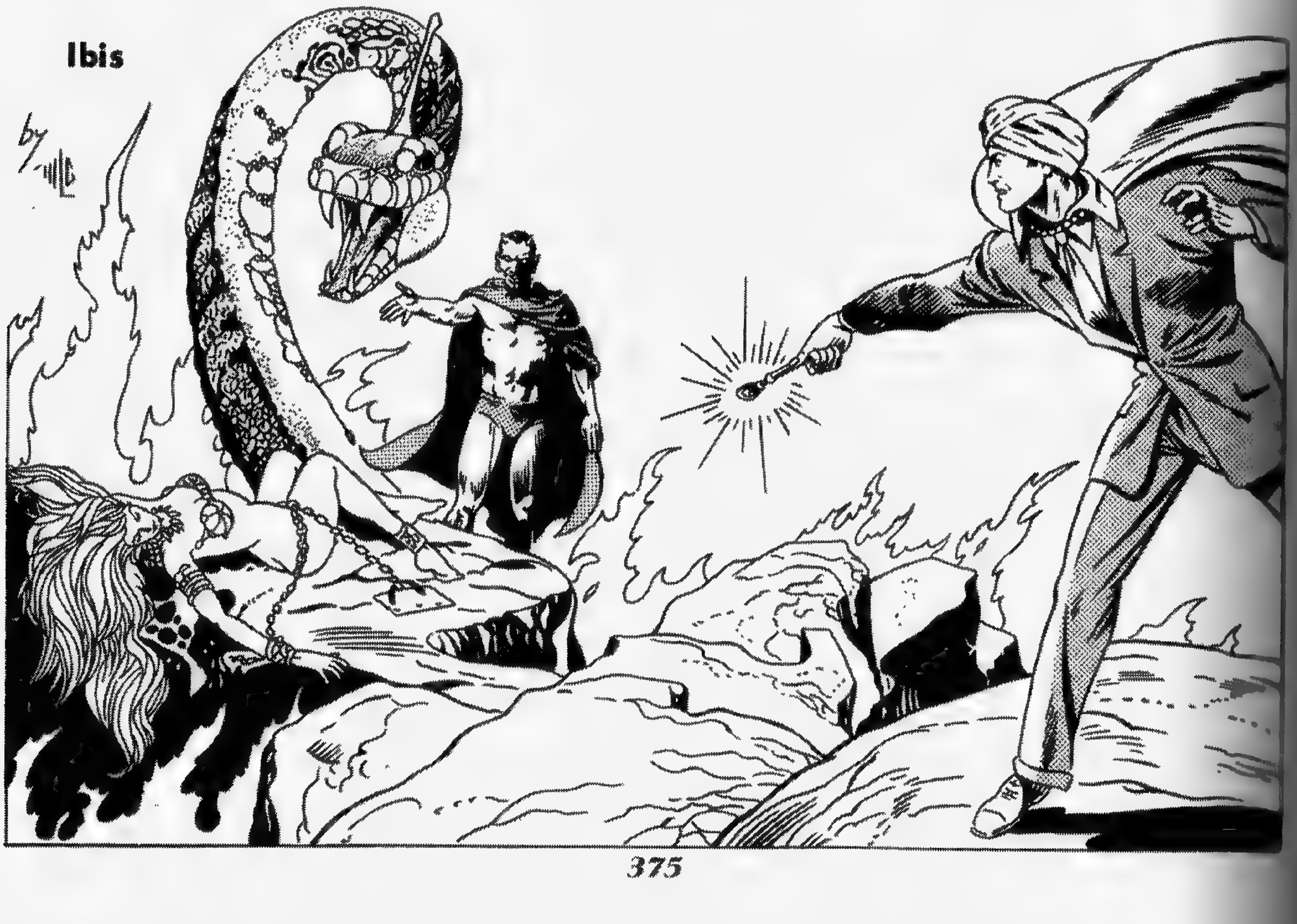
The art in issues 2-6, 8-15 appear to be done by the same artist (Beck/Costanza) while the art in #7 is different. In #7 the title logo and general appearance of the whole strip is different. The title logo is also different in issue #8.

Ibis and Taia continue their battle with Trug thru Whiz #20. After helping an old lady find her missing son, Ibis and Taia return to the Military School to visit Tommy only to discover he is missing...Trug has kidnapped him! With the aid of the Ibistick, Ibis and

Taia traced Trug and Tommy to a remote mountain, only to come up against a 4 armed Demon. By now Ibis and Taia are in such an evil location that the Ibistick only has power enough to save one person, so they save Tommy and send him back to the Academy. Powerless, Ibis and Taia are tied to the legs of giant birds and flown to a castle high above the clouds where they are imprisoned by a giant. However, with a group of small people like themselves, they manage to break free and escape. Ibis climbs up a cable, only to discover that it is a great spider web. He is attacked by the spider and is saved from certain death by a wasp who attacks the spider. Ibis then defeats the giant by turning him into a normal sized man and returns to New York. Trug is still up to no good and is now working with the Devil. In a fight, Ibis beats the Devil who turns out to be Trug in disguise. Ibis' battles with Trug end here, as he seals him in a cave forever. Now a new chapter in Ibis' life begins.

Returning to their hotel, Ibis and Taia find a message warning of a threat to the U.S.A. by secret forces. In issue #21 General SERVISS sends Ibis on a secret mission to Europe. His airplane is shot down, but Ibis manages to parachute to safety using the Ibistick's magic. On the ground, he is able to escape the enemy (who are obviously Nazis), but is later caught by a man known as HALF MAN. Half Man lost both his left arm and right leg in war. The left side of his face is also gone, but is covered by a piece of cloth. Half Man had learned the art of Black Magic while he was recovering from his wounds. He planned to use his powers to help bloody tyrants overthrow Europe. Meanwhile, Taia has followed Ibis to Europe, and she, Ibis and Half Man are caught in a house that is bombed. Half Man manages to escape, with Ibis as his prisoner. Later, when Taia is pulled from the wreckage, she has the Ibistick but has lost her memory. After her memory is restored, Taia uses the Ibistick to locate Ibis. The Ibistick shows Half Man handing Ibis over to a Priest for a human Sacrifice to "The Angry God!" In a frantic state, Taia commands the Ibistick to help Ibis. However, the evil magic is so great that it neutralizes the Ibistick's powers. Refusing to give up, Taia concentrates the power of the Ibistick to just one small point...the ropes that bind Ibis! The ropes fall apart and Ibis kills the Priest. Meanwhile, thinking Ibis dead, Half Man's army starts to overrun a small nation. However, the little nation's small army stands ready to fight to the death, hoping their ancient legend would come true. It was written that a hero would come from heaven to save them in their country's hour of need. After Taia rejoined Ibis, Ibis had the Ibistick take them to the small army. The army upon seeing Ibis and Taia appear out of the air, believed their legend had come true. When Half Man's army attacks, the little army stands its ground and Half Man is forced to call on Black Magic. However, Ibis' white magic is more powerful and he defeats Half Man and restores him to a whole man. In thanks for his restoration, the Half Man uses the last of his magic to send Ibis and Taia home. So ended Ibis' first battle in Europe.

Now Ibis was to take his turn at horror, and in Whiz #25 he was to face RAMESES, the Living Mummy! Returning to the land of their birth, Egypt, they find that the Mummy of King Rameses, the mightiest ruler of old Egypt, once again lives and plans to conquer the country. Rameses was a ghastly sight! Nothing but skin and bones with rotting skin wrapped partly in mummy cloth. The battle that followed was magic against magic. Rameses and his army against Ibis and his friends. Bullets had no effect on Rameses' army because they were ghosts - creatures of the night. Rameses was winning until Ibis commanded the Ibistick to make it morning. With the raising of the sun, the army of Rameses vanishes. Seizing Ibis, Rameses tells him nothing can overpower him until he is in his tomb again. Ibis orders the Ibistick to bring the tomb to Rameses and the monster is again entombed, but only until #26, when Rameses returned. At the end of this story Ibis follows Rameses across the black depths of a great sea, into which Rameses had escaped. But will Ibis catch him? It was never told in Whiz Comics, because the continued stories ended with issue #26, Jan. 23, 1942 and in #27, Feb. 20, 1942 the story concerned the Flying Dutchman legend and the art is by a different artist. It was about this time that Fawcett underwent a change. They dropped most of their lesser heroes and began building up the remaining ones. There were art changes; new characters like Commando Yank, and Phantom Eagle were added and more art from the Jack Binder studios. Continued stories were out and complete stories in. All characters appearing in Whiz Comics - Capt. Marvel, Spy Smasher, Golden Arrow and Ibis would be appearing in their own book before 1942 was over. Only Lance O'Casey, Fawcett's adventurer of the high seas, was denied a comic book of his own, but he would have one later in 1946.



Moving ahead a few issues to Whiz #30, May 15, 1942 we find Ibis and Taia going to Sleepy Hollow to battle the Headless Horseman. This time the Ibistick creates many Ibis' to battle the Headless Horseman. Then in issue #33, the issue that teamed Capt. Marvel and Spy Smasher, we find Ibis battling Hitler and Attila the Hun in a story drawn by Al Carreno.

In issue #35 there is an oddity. Sir Derek Mace, an explorer, while in Africa kills a Witch Doctor. Before the Witch Doctor dies, he places a curse on Mace. A curse that changes Mace into a killer Leopard every night the moon is full. Under the full moon he had but one desire - the desire to kill. In the end, the Ibistick kills the Leopard and he changes back into Mace. Mace's death had broken the spell. The oddity here is, that some years later, in Catman Comics #27, Nov. 1944 this same story was used as a basis for the Deacon story in that issue. The only difference being one Eric VonDoom turned into a Tiger with the first full moon.

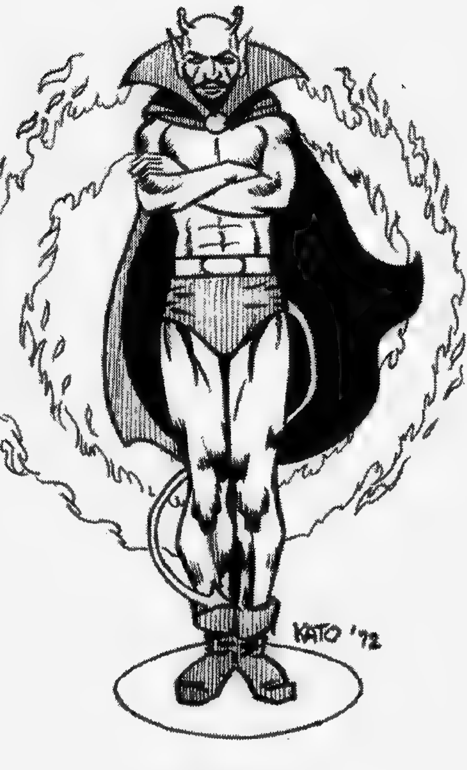
Whiz #36 was a special Halloween issue - or "Special Spook Edition" with all the strips having ghosts in them. In Ibis' case, it was the Black Witch. The Black Witch wasn't defeated. The humans with their jitterbuging and Halloween pranks were just too much for her, so she rode her broomstick into the skies before Ibis could capture her.

I might add that around this time Ibis enjoyed some pretty good art - perhaps his best.

In Whiz #37 the Flying Dutchman returned and in #39 it was magic against magic in "The Slaves of the Lamp." In the best "Spectre" tradition, Ibis and the Genie from the Lamp battle as giants, with the planets in the background. Issue #40 had Ibis in "The Adventure of the Living Paintings." In #42 it was Ibis and the Black Sorcerer. The art had slipped, but it still had a very spooky setting as Ibis battled ghosts in a cemetary. Issue #43 had "The Man Who Sold His Soul To The Devil" with Ibis defeating Satan. By #47, Oct. 1943, Alex Blum was doing the art on Ibis. Blum was one of the real workhorses of the S.M. Iger shop. It was the Moon Monsters in #47 and the "Horror in the Himalayas" in #48. In this story Ibis and Taia go to the Himalayas to help the Chinese soldiers battle the Inhabitants of the Planet Bactium. Bactium was the most distant and powerful planet in the Universe. Because their world had thin air, they landed in the high Himalayas because they couldn't breathe at lower altitudes. They were using the Chinese to experiment on, so they could see how they lived in heavier air. With the Ibistick, Ibis creates air at the mountain top and the aliens are defeated.

From about Whiz #30 thru #48, in my opinion, Ibis was at his peak. The stories all contained 10 pages each and in 1942 Ibis was awarded his own book. The origin was told in the first issue, as previously mentioned. In this issue Ibis also battles Ching Fang, who takes over the Japanese army to invade all of the West. Roosevelt, Stalin and Hitler join forces to fight Fang. In the end, Ibis orders the Ibistick to cause the world to be as though Ching Fang had never been born. Fang vanishes and even Ibis forgets Fang ever existed. It was as if it had all been a dream. The 3rd story pits Ibis against a "Nightmare" and in the 4th story he and Taia journey to an ancient Mayan Empire in Central America to defeat Zoetil and his Bat People. The second issue of Ibis came out early in 1943, with Ibis meeting the Villains of Toyland, Sends Death on a Holiday, meets Ramases the Mummy once more and battles Mr. Discord. Alex Blum's art is featured on the first and last story. Both Ibis 1&2 contained 68 pages. Issue #3 didn't come out 'till 1945 and contained only 36 pages, with Ibis and the Jaguar Men, Music Madness and Karlan, the Last of the Sorcerers.

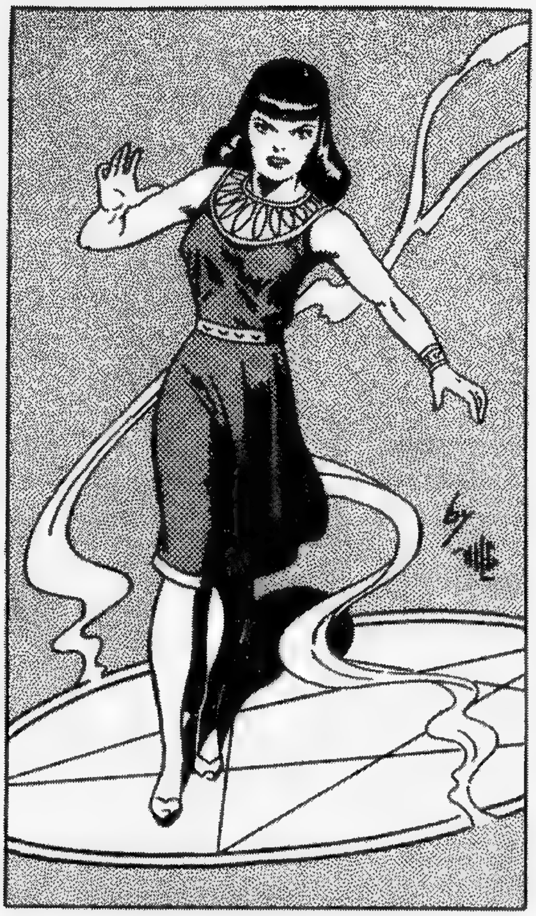
Ibis also appeared in Xmas, Gift and Holiday Comics (Fawcett's giant reprint books) as well as the 1948 Daisy Rifle Handbook and the Wheaties give-away book. This book was an Ibis miniature and had the same cover and lead story as Ibis #1. The second story was from Whiz #30 and the 3rd from Whiz #31. Ibis was also featured in Fawcett's one shot 100 page comic, All Hero #1. This was a book I think should have made it beyond #1. A line up of Capt. Marvel Jr., Capt. Midnight, Lance O'Casey, Ibis, Golden Arrow and Spy Smasher was hard to beat. The stories were top notch and Ibis was no exception, with some of Alex Blum's best art and a 16 page story to boot. This Ibis story still remains as one of my all time favorites. Ibis Introducing BANSHEE O'BRIEN - Boy Enchanter in the Mystery of the "Modern Monster." Starting like a Hollywood movie, we find a bus load of people heading for the city when out of the night comes a many headed monster - A Hydra! The following morning the police learn that the bus was attacked by some sort of supernatural beast. The next night the 100 headed Hydra strikes deep in a tunnel and The District Attorney calls on Ibis. That night Ibis and the people of the town trap the beast in the middle of a bridge and Ibis orders the Ibistick to destroy the Hydra. However, for the first time, nothing happens - the Ibistick is powerless! The Ibistick worked only against the old evils of the old world and was powerless against the Hydra, an evil created by the foulness and disease of modern great cities. Suddenly, a young boy appeared before the Hydra and pointing at the beast yelled a few magic words. A flash of light appeared and the monster fled into the river. The boy was Banshee O'Brien, who had tried to help a dying man and was given a book called "The Secrets of the New Magic." Ibis and Banshee became partners and followed the Hydra to an amusement park. Banshee's magic didn't always work and it failed this time, so Ibis had to utilize the Ibistick. The Ibistick clad them in armor and they started to cut off the monster's heads, only to find they grew faster than they could cut them off. Dawn was coming and the Hydra fled underground into the House of Horrors. Ibis and Banshee followed in close pursuit, only to have Ibis lose the Ibistick. Their only hope now was to run. Later, after finding the Ibistick, Ibis tells Taia and Banshee that he now knew how to destroy the Hydra. Since it was born in darkness, the one thing it feared was light. Next our heroes confront the menace at the ship yards. In true Hollywood fashion they try to kill it with electricity, using Banshee's current and the Ibistick to direct it at the Hydra. However, Banshee could not hold on and his magic slipped from him. Now bigger than ever, there seemed no way to stop the Hydra. Suddenly Banshee cried out to Ibis to make the sun come out. In full light, the Hydra began to get smaller and smaller until finally it vanished. Banshee also appeared with Ibis in some of the Whiz stories as his partner.



Apollyon

By the mid 1940's all of Fawcett's characters, outside of the Marvels, became mostly filler features. Ibis was no different. Once enjoying 10 pages of story, Ibis was now reduced to only 6 pages. The art was no longer as good as it had been in the early '40's, but Ibis was not one to give up. Infact, Ibis appeared in every issue of Whiz from #1 thru #155 (the last issue) except for issue #107.

In Whiz #72, March 1946 Ibis came up against the Mystery of the EVIL IBISTICK. Humphrey Keene had just discovered he was Bankrupt and was angry at Ibis because he had wealth and power and he had nothing. So Keene sold his soul to Apollyon, in exchange for a



Taia

Black Ibistick to make him wealthy. However, he wanted more than money - he wanted Taia as well. Commanding the Black Ibistick to bring Taia to him, also brought Ibis and in the same instant Ibis commanded the good Ibistick to bring Taia to him. Taia couldn't respond both ways, so she died. Seeing what a fool he was, Keene ordered the Black Ibistick to restore Taia's life and take his instead. Ibis discovered that Keene had sold his soul to Apollyon, so he ordered the Ibistick to take him to hell. There, he fought with Apollyon and defeated him, thus saving Keene's life.

In issue #73, Ibis battles Pirates in "Delayed Treasure Hunt" and spends "A Day At The Races" in #74. In Whiz #76 Ibis meets the Flying Dutchman. Instead of a ship that sailed the 7 seas, this ghost ship was an airplane with a cursed pilot. The pilot had sold his soul to the devil (where have we heard that before?), but in the end Ibis managed to save him. In issue #81 the story featured "The Terror Typewriter" (a typewriter that made happen whatever was typed on it.) and a giant gorilla. By now the stories had expanded to 8 pages and the art was being done each issue by the same artist once again. Nothing outstanding happened in the following issues. Ibis met all types of characters, even some ghosts straight out of Casper in #87. Then in Whiz #89 this mediocrity came to an end. In that issue Ibis met "The Man With Nine Lives!" When Ibis answers his front door he finds a terrified man...a man terrified of cats! He had once belonged to a Society of Cat Worshipers and when he was chosen for one of their sacrifices he escaped. However, he had been found and suddenly cats appeared and started attacking him. Ibis ordered the Ibistick to present Cerberus, a 3 headed dog, to destroy the cats. One cat was killed and upon its death it changed back to a man. The High Priest of the Cat Worshipers swore Ibis would die. Ibis met the High Priest at the city dump and in a fight Ibis stabs the Priest in the heart. Ibis thought him dead, but when he turned to go the Priest jumped up and hurled the knife at him. Ibis ducks and this time sinks the knife deep into the body of the Priest. In issue #89, the Cat Priest returns! Unlike humans, he has 9 lives, but now 2 are gone. Soon Taia is in his hands and Ibis is lured into a trap. The trap is sprung and the Cat Priest gets the Ibistick. He orders it to blow Ibis to atoms. By now, we all know what will occur don't we...The Priest lost another life! Ibis retreives the Ibistick and orders it to take him to the temple of the Cat Worshipers. He is just in time to save Taia, who was about to be sacrificed. Ibis destroyes the temple and discovers the giant statue the Cat Worshipers worshiped was really alive. The Ibistick turns it to ice and it melts. So ended one of the best Ibis stories since the early forties.

There were no more outstanding stories until issue's #101 and 102, when Ibis met The Vampire Twins! Baron Ornzy and his sister Maryani had fled their native land and come to America to find fresh prey. However, they found Ibis instead. Ibis destroyed the Baron by exposing him to sunlight in issue #101 and Maryani got hers in #102.

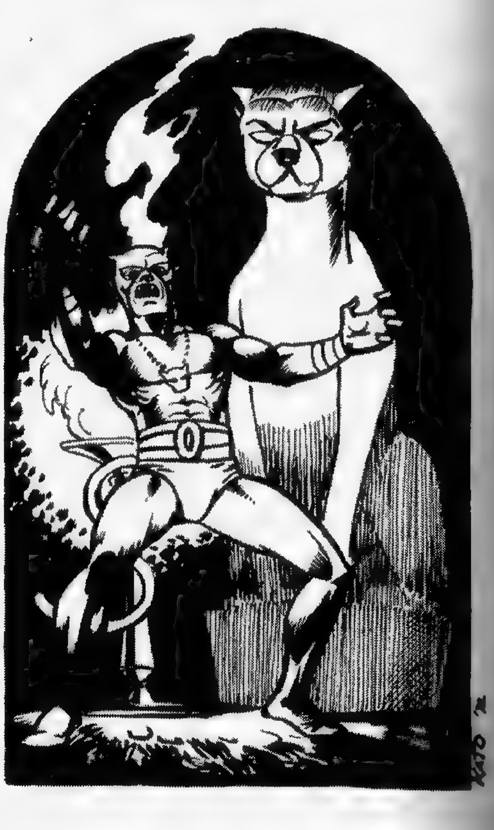
In Whiz #117 Ibis fought Apollyon, the Destroyer. He returned, with his Devil Imps in #123. In issue #126 Ibis battled the Headless Horseman. This was not the same story that appeared back in #30, but it was along the same lines. Issue #128 finds Taia and Ibis on the moon and deep within the earth in #132, fighting a huge brain.

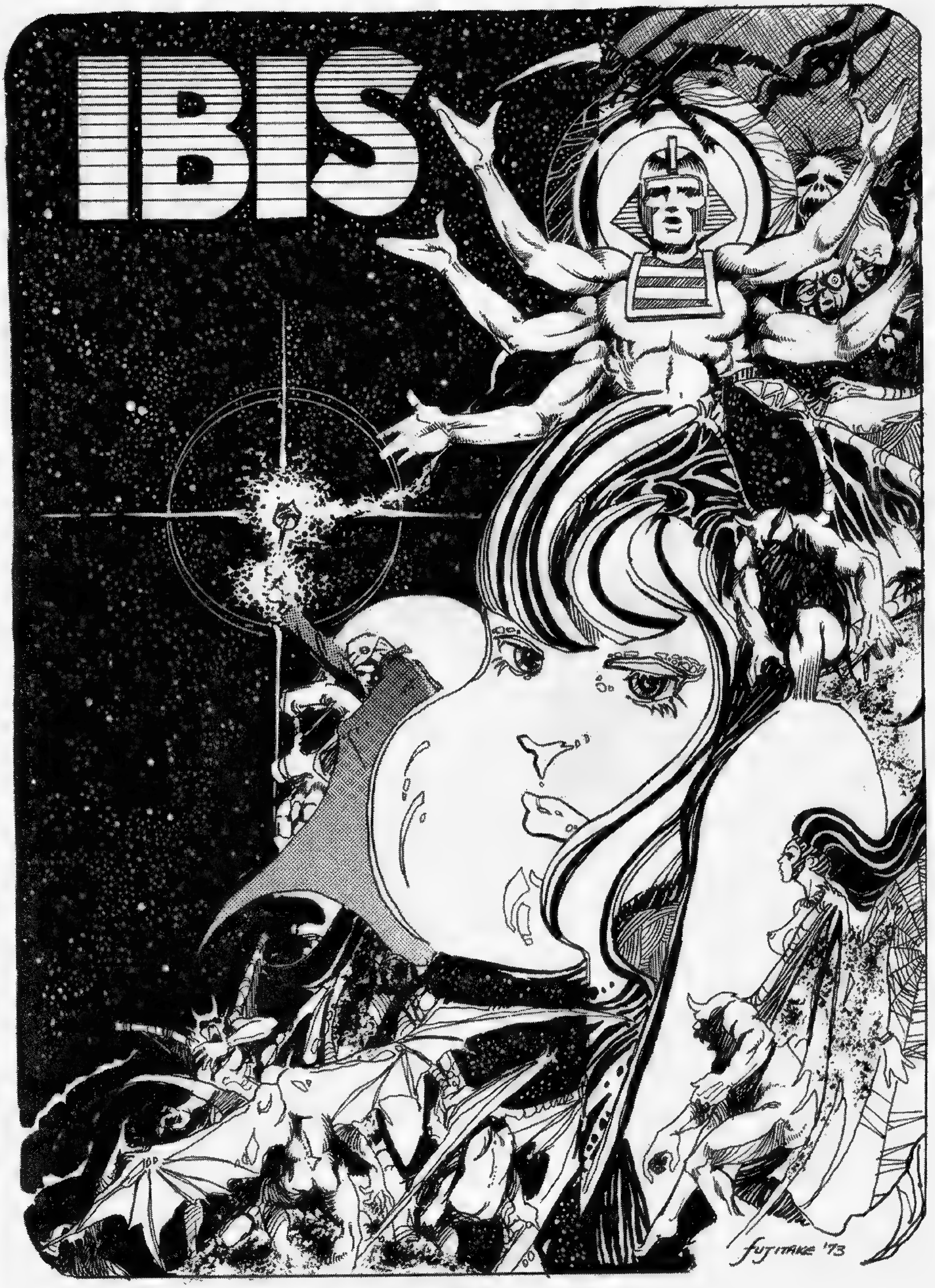
The remaining stories aren't really worth mentioning and with Whiz #155, June 1953 Ibis' long career finally came to an end...almost. I say almost, because he did make one more appearance in Charlton Comics' "Danger and Adventure" in 1955. The story was drawn by Alex Blum and had Ibis pitted against a Viking Horde. For some reason, Ibis' turban was white in that adventure, where in all his Fawcett adventures it had been red.

Writers for the Ibis stories were Manly Wade Wellman in 1941 and Otto Binder from 1942 to 1946. Artists were many, with most of it coming from the Jack Binder shop. Mac Raboy worked on Ibis and Nat Champlin did some stories in 1942. Both Bill Ward (of Torchy fame) and Dick Rylands did pencils. Ray Harford and Jim Porter did inks around 1942. Al Carreno did some art in 1942 and Alex Blum had stories during '42, '43 and '44. Sam Cooper also got into the act in 1946, while Kurt Schaffenberger carried the load in later years after 1945. Both C.C. Beck and Pete Costanza did the early stories and Marc Swayze did at least one after the war. To sum it up, most art came from 4 different art shops - Harry Chesler's, Jack Binder's, S.M. Iger's and last C.C. Beck.

Ibis is gone now; but who knows, with DC re-presenting Capt. Marvel perhaps the man of the Ibis will excite us once again!

Cat Priest

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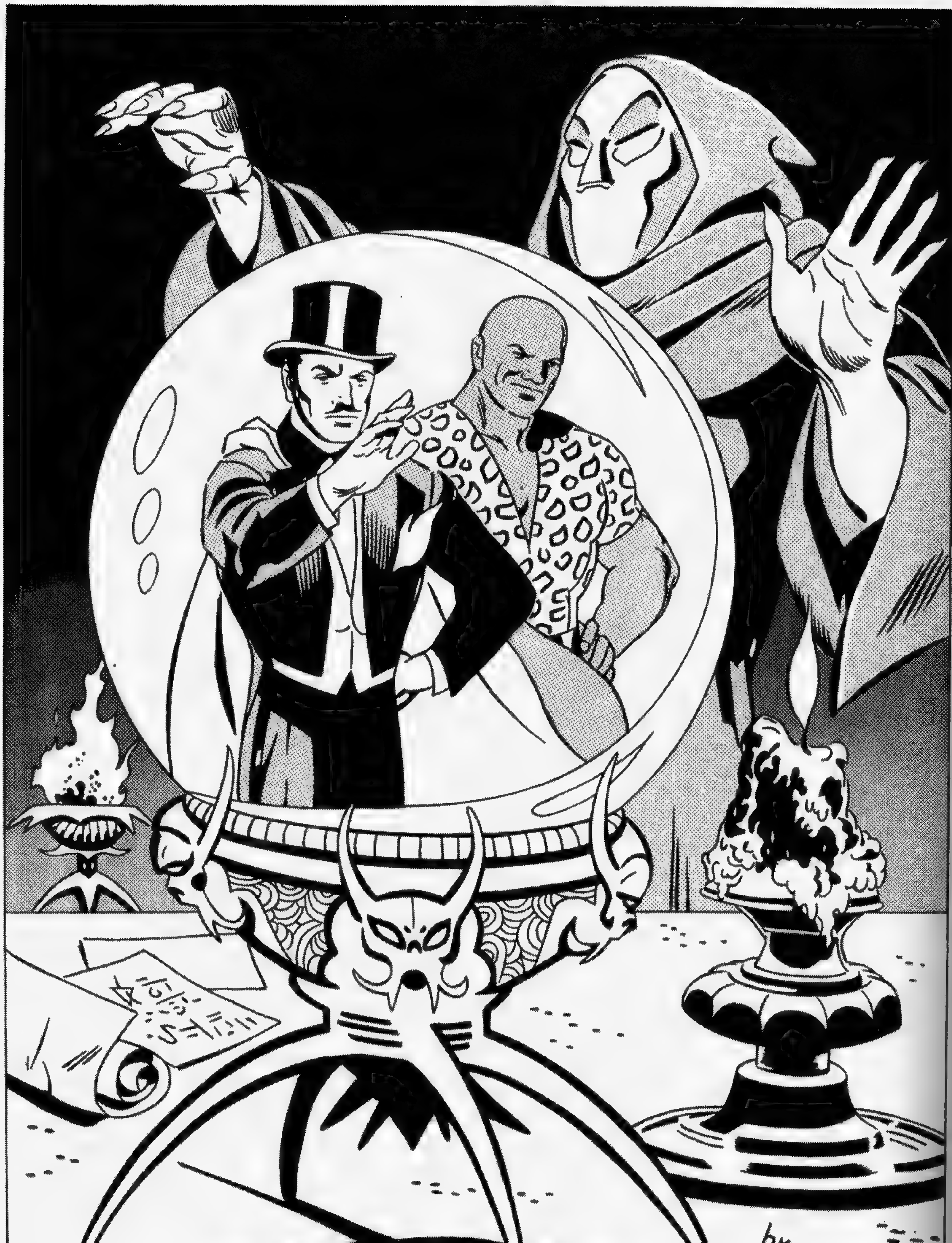
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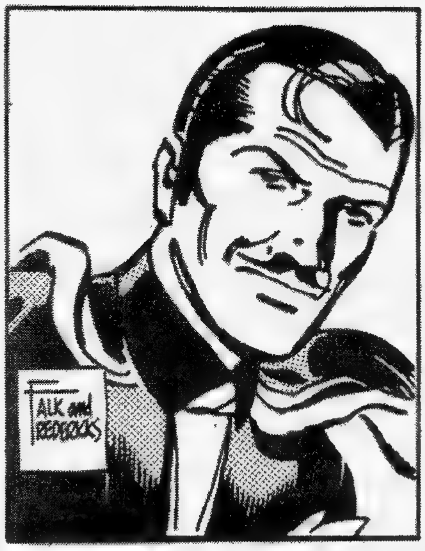


MANDRAKE'S MAGIC MAKER

An Interview With...

FRED FREDERICKS

by

Martin L. Greim

Fred Fredericks has to be one of the warmest, friendliest, individuals I've met in many years! I first came into contact with Fred a short time after last years Boston Comic Convention. (Labor Day Weekend - '72.) Unable to attend, he'd phoned me to ask how the convention had gone and to inquire about a "Red Barry" Big Little Book. We got to talking about comics and old movie serials and it was only a short time later that we formulated plans for this article. After all, what better subject for a magic-oriented issue than an interview with the artist of MANDRAKE the MAGICIAN.

I was really looking forward to doing this article for two reasons. First, I wanted very much to meet, in person, the man whom I'd talked with on the phone and written many letters to...and secondly, to do the interview, it meant I'd have to travel down to Cape Cod once again. I spent all of my summers, up until 3 years ago, on Cape Cod. In fact, not very far from where Fred Fredericks now lives. The Cape holds a lot of memories for me...I sold my first piece of art in Provincetown and lived in an artists colony there for a time. So, for me, this trip and interview was filled with nostalgia.

It was Saturday, January 13th and my friend and neighbor Al Bradford and I were on our way to Eastham to spend the afternoon with Fred. Al, whose pictures grace this article, brought along his trusty camera and made a tolerant companion as I reminised and pointed out some of the places I'd grown up in. He became even more tolerant, when I showed him some of the places I used to buy comics in! True fan, that Al Bradford!

Having spent only summers on Cape Cod, I was amazed to see the ocean frozen solid against the shore line breakwaters. It was bitter cold this day! About 2 p.m., I finally nosed my Buick up the Fredericks' pine tree bordered driveway. Fred came out from the back of the house and bid us welcome. We were ushered inside and once again we were warm. Warm on the outside and the inside, from Fred's hospitality. After we had removed our jackets, Fred introduced us to his family...his wife Frances, his daughter Connie, and his son Patrick.

There was one more member of the Fredericks' family we didn't meet. This was because he was added to the family a week or so after our visit. The new addition was "Rip" a german shepherd puppy. Fred swears he's not named after one Remington Kirby.

While Frances and Connie went about their business, Fred, Al and I went into the living room; followed, a few moments later, by Patrick. Al and I had brought along some art...some by ourselves and others by Steranko, Wood, Kirby and Williamson. We talked for quite some time about art and found Fred liking uncluttered art (art without a lot of "spinach", as Fred put it) best. I asked why Fred had moved from New Jersey to Eastham, Mass. He explained that for years he'd visited the Cape on summers and one day he decided to get away from the hustle and bustle and move there. As Fred put it..."I can mail my art in just as easy from here, as New Jersey."

Fred asked us if we'd like to see some movies from his movie collection. Naturally, we agreed! I've been a movie serial fan for years and I was overjoyed to see that Fred had many of my favorites. Films such as "Red Barry" starring Buster Crabe, "Dick Tracy", "The Clutching Hand", and "Daredevils of the Red Circle" with Charles "Ming the Merciless" Middleton as the villian 39013. Fred also had a very special treat in store for us. He had a copy of an unsold Mandrake the Magician television pilot film. You can be certain, not many comic fans have seen this film. The film starred Coe Norton as Mandrake, Woody Strode as Lothar, and Lisa Howard as Narda. The characterization and costumes were perfect. Lothar had a little hair on his head and sometimes wore a flowing leopard cape, but other than this, it was as though the characters from the Mandrake strip had stepped right out of the comic page. The story was filmed in Bermuda and dealt

THE FREDERICKS FAMILY

From left to right: Fred, his wife Frances, his son Patrick, with his ukulele and his his daughter Connie, who is probably thinking..."Who are these two wierd guys and why are they taking our picture?"

Fred sets up the movie screen, smiles and says, "Now we'll show some movies!" However, like any of us who've shown home movies, he runs into a bit of trouble... to say the least.

with Mandrake and Co., helping a government agent escape from a South American country. The show might have made it, except for the fact it was so horribly written. With all the chances for Mandrake to perform magic, he wound up saving the day by knocking the gun out of the villain's hand with a pen knife. It's a shame that this show, which had many possibilities, wasn't blessed with a better script. Perhaps if the show's producers had consulted with Lee Falk, Mandrake might be on television today.

Fred set up his silver movie screen and proceeded to transfer selected films from movie cores (spools that films are stored on) to movie reels. However, it was as if the astral form of The Cobra, Mandrake's arch foe, was present causing trouble. The movie reel slipped partially off the core and it took Fred quite some time to untangle it. Finally, with all the film safely on reels, we sat back and enjoyed seeing the fantastic serial action of yesteryear. Dick Tracy braving roaring infernos and blazing guns, Red Barry foiling Russian spies and oriental villains, and the Daredevils of the Red Circle fighting crooks and outrunning torrents of water rushing through an underground transit tunnel were only part of the afternoon's action.

After the movies were over, Fred presented me with something I'm very pleased to have in my collection. It was an original Sunday page representing some of his early work on Mandrake. The page was dated December 26, 1965. Portions of this Sunday page are represented in this article, along with some art Fred did especially for it.

At this point we stopped for supper. Connie had prepared a very tasty meal that both Al and I found very filling. After supper, tape recorder in hand, we went into Fred's studio and taped the following interview.

INTERVIEW:

Q. Will you give us some information about yourself... where you were born...art training and early strips, prior to Mandrake.

A. I was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey in the year of the CRASH, 1929. I was editor of the school paper and when I went into the Marines I was the staff cartoonist on the camp paper...The Camp Lejune Globe. After I got out, in 1953, I went to Cartoonists and Illustrators School. I went there 3 years, nights only, and studied with Hogarth, Dan Barry and Jerry Robinson. In 1957, I sold a local history strip to the Elizabeth Dailey Journal. It was called "New Jersey's Patriots" and it was about the Revolutionary War. The strip had a run of about 2 years and appeared in papers all throughout New Jersey. In 1960, I started a strip called "The Late, Late War" which was a Civil War gag-a-day thing. One day a gag about the South, the next day the North. It was played for laughs, but when the papers down South started to carry it they said..."There's nothing funny about the Civil War!" and that was that. After we lost papers on that, we did something in the same vein as "New Jersey's Patriots" for Adcocks Associates Syndicate. It was a 6 times a week strip about the Confederate side of the Civil War, and it was called "Under The Stars and Bars." The strip started at the beginning of the war and took it right up to the end. It ran for a year, or a little over. At that time I was also doing comic books for Gold Key. I started there by writing such books as Nancy and Sluggo, Terry-Toons, Mighty Mouse, and in 1961 I got a break...I wrote and drew my first book. It was called, "King Leonardo and his Short Subjects."

Q. How did you get interested in comic art?

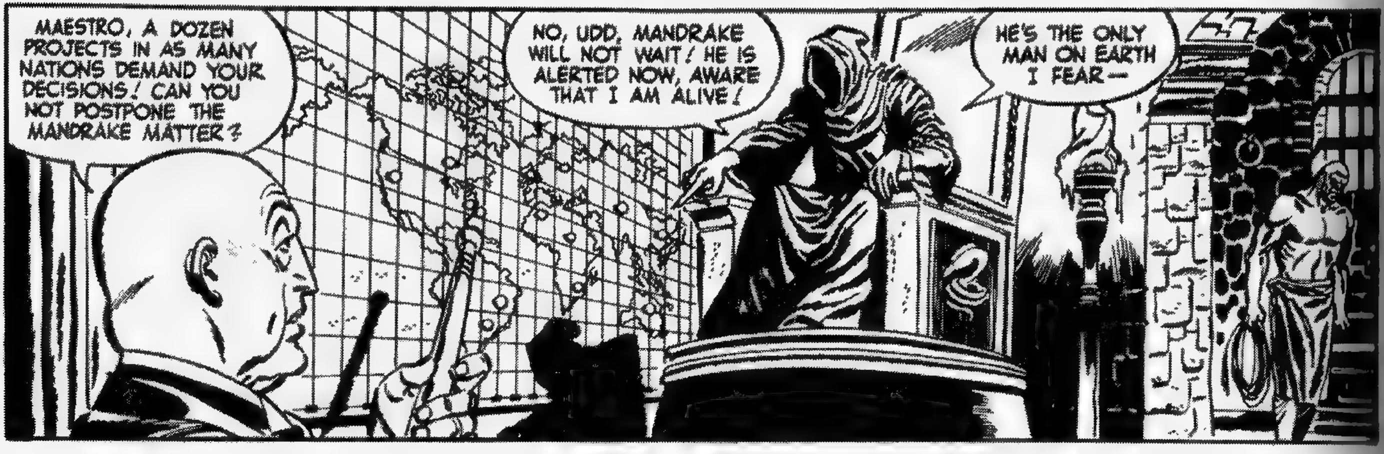
A. Like everyone else, I guess. I looked at the comics every day. My favorites were Dick Tracy, Terry and the Pirates, Mandrake and The Phantom. I also liked Scorchy Smith and, believe it or not, Harold Teen. I used to think that if I could do cross hatches like Harold Gray in Little Orphan Annie, I'd have it made!

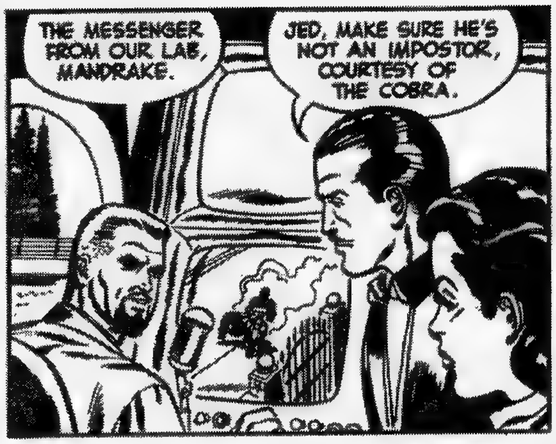
Q. Phil Davis was Mandrake's first artist; followed, after his death, by his wife. Did you take over the strip after her?

A. Yes! I took it over in April of 1965. Actually the drawings were supposed to begin in June, but I was asked to take over toward the end of a story and to do it in the same style as was then appearing in the strip. I did this for two weeks and then was able to switch it over to my own style.

Q. Speaking of style...Has Davis' art influenced you and has any other artist particularly influenced you?

A. Yes, Davis has influenced me. He was very good and came from the school that many of the King Feature artists did, in where they all drew like Alex Raymond. It was a popular style. Lyman Young had it and Charles Flanders and even in the old "Radio Patrol" strip.


MAESTRO, A DOZEN PROJECTS IN AS MANY NATIONS DEMAND YOUR DECISIONS! CAN YOU NOT POSTPONE THE MANDRAKE MATTER?
NO, UDD, MANDRAKE WILL NOT WAIT! HE IS ALERTED NOW, AWARE THAT I AM ALIVE!
HE'S THE ONLY MAN ON EARTH I FEAR—


THE MESSENGER FROM OUR LAB, MANDRAKE.
JED, MAKE SURE HE'S NOT AN IMPOSTOR, COURTESY OF THE COBRA.

Charlie Schmidt used it. It seemed to be the style of the time and it payed off for them.

Q. Do you have any favorite comic strip artists today?

A. Well, I read them all and like most of them. I can appreciate how hard it is to pack what you can into strips that are four columns wide and are not too tall either. It's like you have a little more room than a postage stamp for each panel, but you do with it what you can. Of the stuff that's around today, I still like what John Prentice is doing on Rip Kirby. It's good and clear and doesn't look muddy at all. That's one of the problems you have when stuff is reduced so small. I like what Sy Barry is doing on The Phantom. Again it's good and clear and easy to read. That's half the battle right there. If it's too loaded with "spinach" and mud, people will say, "Why bother!" and go on to something else that they can figure out. So I think a lot of the stuff that appears on the comic book page is fine, but it can't work in the comic strip, because there just isn't the space.

Q. Do you have much control over Mandrake's actions? Does Lee Falk give you explicit story lines to follow, or do you control the way you depict the characters?

A. If in a story Lee wants someone to look a certain way he'll tell me the way to depict him; otherwise I can do it my own way. Lee's scripts are very good and easy to follow. He knows what he wants, but unless it's something special, he leaves it up to me on how to make the characters look.

Q. How do you go about laying out your pannels?

A. First, I do my own lettering and decide where the word baloons are going to be. Then I try to vary my shots, almost like a movie. You have a long shot, then a close up, then a medium shot. You try to keep the camera moving, just like in a film.

Q. How many weeks in advance do you work from the actual publication of the art?

A. Five weeks for the daily strip and ten weeks for the Sunday page.

Q. What type of material do you work with?

A. I use an Esterbrook #22 pen point, with which I get a good thick and thin line. After I ink the figures with a pen, I put in the blacks with a #3 Windsor-Newton brush and always keep the white paint handy in case of mistakes!

Q. Do you get much fan mail, especially now that more fans see Mandrake in The Menomonee Falls Gazette?

A. Yes, a little bit more and I'm always happy to get it, as I know how tough it is to write a letter. They say that for every letter you get, that's for a hundred that wanted to write. That's what leads us onward. The knowledge that there's a hundred people out there that wanted to write, but can't!

Q. What is your work week like?

A. Well, I'm lucky if I can get two days off in a row. I do the lettering of the dailies and the Sundays all at once and while I pencil one page, I like to switch off and ink another. This keeps me in the mood. You can jump from one to the other, before you start to get tired. The hours are long, but it's still fun! I'd rather be doing this, than working down at Kinney Shoes.

Q. Have you ever used an assistant?

A. I never have! I've always done the whole thing from start to finish. An assistant would be to save time, but by the time you explain to him what you want and changing things, when they haven't done it exactly the way you wanted it, I figure your time is shot there anyway.

Q. Does it ever cause you any problems in your continuity, when shift from the dailies to the Sundays?

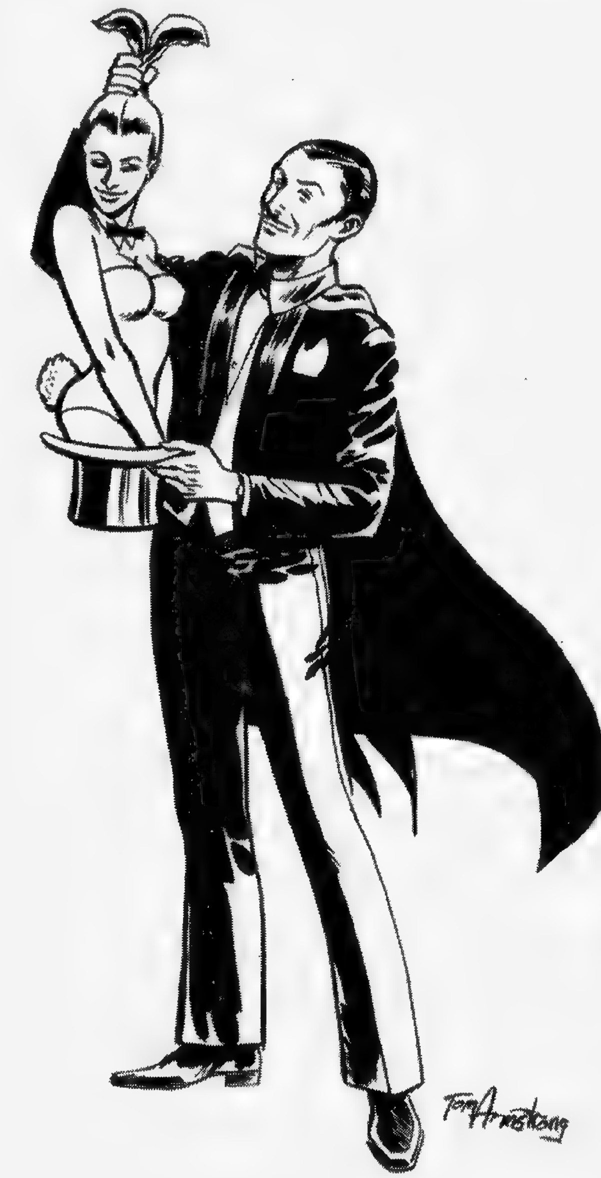
A. No, none at all! One thing I do that helps me out, is I take Polaroid shots of the dailies that include a new character or a new locale. In this way, I know what it looks like the following week when I start in again. You'd be surprised what you can get in a Polaroid shot. I can get sections from three dailies, by twisting them around to shoot the panels I want.

Q. Is there any particular phase of art that gives you problems?

A. Well, let's see...hands and feet don't give me any problems, but the animals do! If you can find a good picture to work from, then you're alright. Horses don't give me much trouble, because I always liked to draw westerns. I think almost any artist has problems with animals. They're alright with people, but when it comes to animals you've got to be a specialist.

Q. Will you tell us about your hobbies? I know you are quite a movie buff.

A. It's amazing how many people in the cartooning game like the same things, or were influenced by the



same things when they were younger...like the movie serials and the old radio programs. You get together with a bunch of guys and you find out they liked the same shows and the same movies when they were younger. The serials helped me a lot. I'd see a good chapter and I'd want to go home and put something like that down on paper. About 10 years ago I found out there were a lot of silent pictures for sale, mainly shorts, not too many features, in 8m.m. They weren't too expensive, so I started with that, then went to 8m.m. sound. However, none of the old serials were being released in that area, so I had to go to 16m.m. Mainly, I like the serials that were based on comics. Serials like Red Barry, Dick Tracy, Radio Patrol and Ace Drummond. I found out something funny one time when I was visiting Al Williamson, another film buff. There was a great serial called "Daredevils Of The Red Circle," where the "heavy" was known by his old number in prison, which was 39013. Whenever, I draw a picture of a convict or a mug shot, the number under it is always 39013. I mentioned this to Al and he laughed and told me he did exactly the same thing. You see what I mean about people in this line of work being influenced by the same things?

Q. Do you read comic books at all, and if so, do you have any favorites?

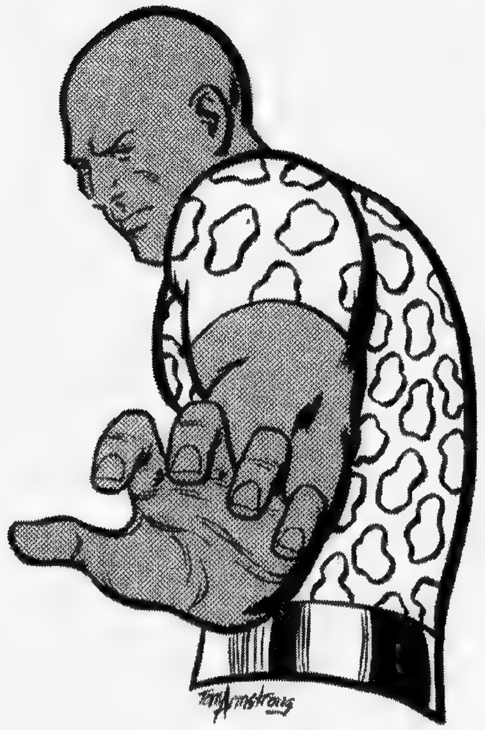
A. Oh yes! I still look 'em over. And of course my daughter buys them too. I like to look them over and see what's going on at D.C. and Marvel. The only outfit I ever worked for was Gold Key. I worked for them for 5 years and never had a chance to go over to D.C. or Marvel with my portfolio, because I was lucky enough to be kept pretty busy there. When there was nothing doing in the adventure department, they'd give me something with funny animals or a gag book like "Bullwinkle" or "Mr. Ed." Then, when there would be something cooking with "Boris Karloff" or "Twilight Zone," I'd get a straight adventure story too. Today, I like the books that have the reprints from the "Golden Age" in them; because it's a chance to look at them without paying an arm and a leg.

Q. Many comic books and a few comic strips have dealt with socially significant subjects. Has Mandrake ever done this, and do you think this type of subject has a place in comics?

A. In Mandrake, I believe Lothar was the first black man to appear. Although in "All In Color For A Dime" I think they called him an Hawaiian or something. I really don't think socially significant subjects have a place in comic strips. In a daily strip, for about 15 seconds, people like to forget the cares of the day and read about adventure or get a laugh. I think people would rather see Mandrake battle the Cobra and leave the socially significant material to the editorial page.

Q. Is there any kind of "code" that governs the way you draw a comic strip and have you ever had to change any piece of art?

A. No, I've never had to change anything. Although it's supposed to be the old thing...good taste that governs the way you do a comic strip. A lot of guys these days seem to be yelling that comics should be more adult, like the movies, etc. But I think they forget that even though adults read the comics, it's still the thing kids ask for first. I feel that if things get too adult parents who used to say, "You can't go to that movie," may wind up saying, "You can't read those comics!" I know in England, some of them try to get as spicey as they can, but that's a whole different world. In the U.S. it never seemed to go. It may change...I don't know. If it does, I think it will just be something else to help wreck the comic page.



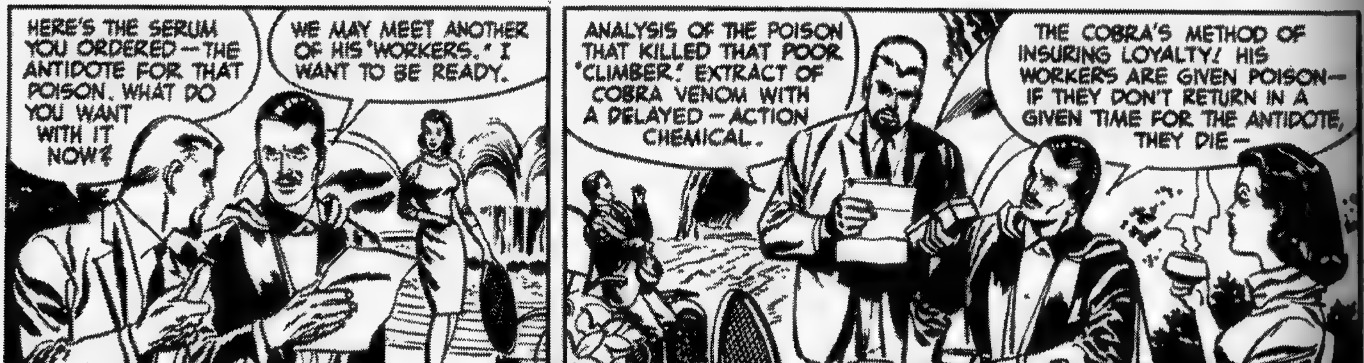
Q. Do you research anything for Mandrake? Like a locale, autos, costumes, etc.

A. Oh yes! You always have to look things up...make sure you're doing it right. Like with autos...you can't use any specific model, but if it's 1973, you have to have a 1973 looking car. It wouldn't be right to have a guy driving a Packard and claiming it's a 1973 auto. If a locale changes, I try to research the costumes or at least try to make them look right. If it looks right, then you're half way home.

Q. Back around 1966, Alain Resnais was going to make a Mandrake movie, but became disinterested. Have you any idea why this happened?

A. I heard a little about it. I believe he was sidetracked by something he was doing with Stan Lee. I do know Resnais gives Mandrake and The Phantom a lot of credit; saying he got a lot of the camera angles and the way a story is told from these strips.

Q. Can you offer any advice to aspiring writers and artists who wish to break into the comic strip field?


HERE'S THE SERUM YOU ORDERED — THE ANTIDOTE FOR THAT POISON. WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH IT NOW?
WE MAY MEET ANOTHER OF HIS "WORKERS." I WANT TO BE READY.
ANALYSIS OF THE POISON THAT KILLED THAT POOR "CLIMBER." EXTRACT OF COBRA VENOM WITH A DELAYED — ACTION CHEMICAL.
THE COBRA'S METHOD OF INSURING LOYALTY! HIS WORKERS ARE GIVEN POISON — IF THEY DON'T RETURN IN A GIVEN TIME FOR THE ANTIDOTE, THEY DIE —

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LEFT

Fred Fredericks puts the finishing touches on a Mandrake daily page.

RIGHT

Comic Crusader editor Martin L. Greim and Fred Fredericks in his studio.

A. In adventure strips, it's mighty tough. The syndicates seem to be buying the funny strips more readily than the adventure ones. However, in Europe, Sweeden in particular, it seems to be just the opposite. They went in for the funny, gag-a-day strips, but now adventure is very big with them. The adventure strip today seems to be better accepted in the comic book than in the comic strip. If you had a good gag strip, I think you'd stand a much better chance of selling it to a newspaper syndicate than if you had an adventure strip.

Q. Let's talk a little bit about Mandrake. About how far back does the 8 organization go and the villain called The Cobra?

A. The Cobra, I believe, was the first big villain Mandrake faced. He was actually a man called Lucifer, who was Mandrake's teacher at "The School of Magic." He wears a silver mask because he was badly burned in a fire that he blames Mandrake for. The sign of 8 organization only goes back to 1965. In fact, I did the first story on them. They show up every now and then and get nastier each time.

Q. Is there any particular character in the Mandrake series you enjoy working on more than the others, or any particular story line you enjoy working on?

A. No. There all fun to draw. There was one adventure, a while back, I especially enjoyed. It was one in where two of Mandrake's villains teamed up...The Cobra and The Mole.

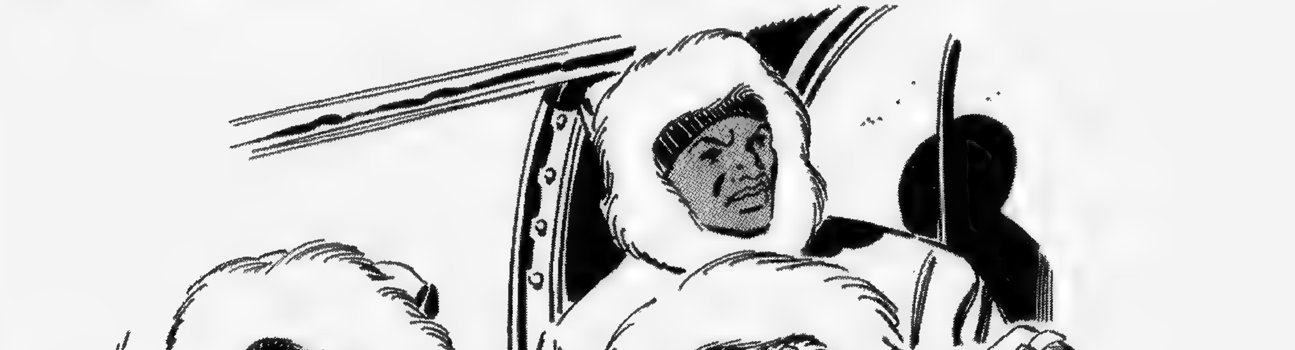
Q. What does the future hold for Mandrake and Fred Fredericks?

A. Well, let's see...Mandrake has had a run now of 40 years...beginning in 1934; so as long as the hand is quicker than the eye and Mandrake can keep up with the tricks, I'll be there. Mandrake is very popular in Italy, France and South America. He's in many papers in the U.S., but his popularity overseas is really strong. Like The Phantom, I think he'll keep rolling right along.

With the interview ended, Al and I prepared to leave on our long trip home. We had both spent a wonderful afternoon that we would long remember.

In closing, Fred imparted a story to us about how he had gone to a local school to give a chalk talk. He had felt pretty good about going there, until he realized that the kids had expected to see a magician doing tricks. Ah yes, the price you pay for not being syndicated in the Boston area.

Fred Fredericks is a man who enjoys his work. He works hard at it, doing both the daily and Sunday Mandrake strips. Still, with all this work, he maintains his sense of humor and love for the graphic media. I'm pleased to have met Fred Fredericks and that I can call him friend!



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For this edition of COMIC CHATTER, Bob Cosgrove talks about pencilling in comic art. It is a brief introduction for the uninitiated and for the pencil pages that follow.

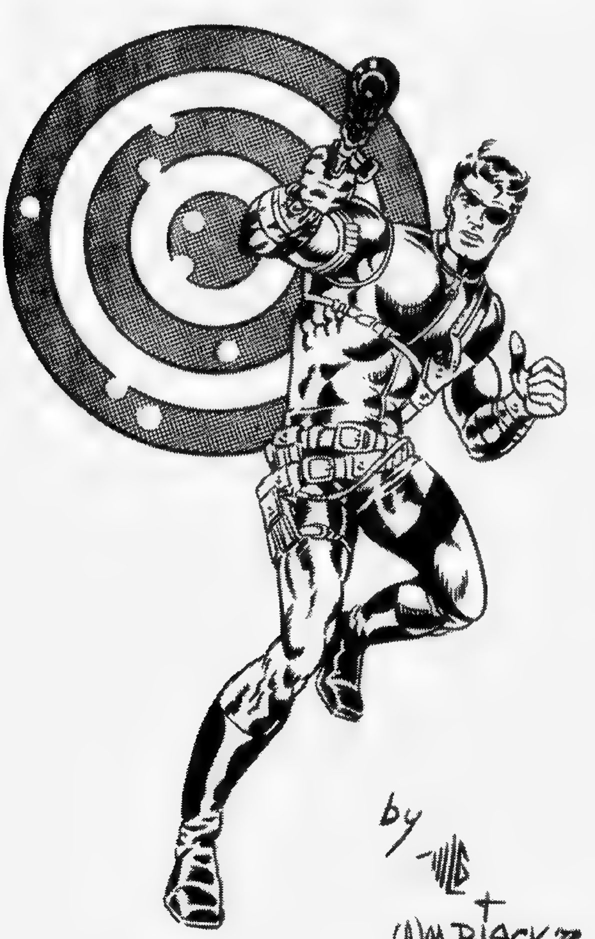
The Art Of Pencilling
by
BOB COSGROVE

The production of a comic book can be broken down into a number of basic stages:
The writer, who conceives the story.
The breakdown artist, who takes the story and translates it into a series of picture layouts.
The penciller, who takes the breakdowns and transforms them into finished line drawings.
The inker, who goes over the pencils with ink, so that they can be reproduced.
The letterer, who does the text and word baloon lettering.

Aesthetically speaking, it is usually best if the writer, breakdown artist, penciller and inker are the same man, but often this is not the case. The most important job is that of the breakdown artist, for it is he who sees that the story is told simply, directly, and visually. Very often the penciller and the breakdown artist are the same man.

Pencil drawings can be done in two basic ways - line and tone. A line drawing uses the point of the pencil to outline the content of the picture. Later, the artist may indicate areas of shadow. This is a somewhat artificial way to proceed, because when the human eye looks at an object, it does not see a black line outlining it, such as the artist draws.

The alternate approach - which most artists use - is tone. Using the side of the pencil, the artist creates subtle variations in shadows, playing dark areas against light to create the illusion of three-dimensional form.



COMIC
CHATTER

However, the tonal approach is very rarely used by comic artists, simply because they are doing illustrations which will later be inked. Without using crosshatching, or ink wash, subtle tone effects are difficult to achieve in ink. Thus, pencils are for the most part line drawings, because pencils themselves can not be reproduced very successfully. However, attempts have been made by National, and with somewhat more success, by Warren Pub. One way to prepare pencils suitable for offset reproduction is to draw with a very black pencil on a highly textured paper called Ross Board. Pat Boyette did this for Charlton's "Children of Doom" story.

Drawing for mass reproduction, and unable to always count on the co-operation of the inker and the colorist, the pencil artist must use fairly traditional compositional techniques to make sure the panels hold together. These methods involve composing the picture according to pre-determined intellectual rules. These include locating the main action at a pre-determined "center of interest," composing the picture in the shape of a triangle, placing the main figure at the picture's "vanishing point," or using perspective in some other fashion.

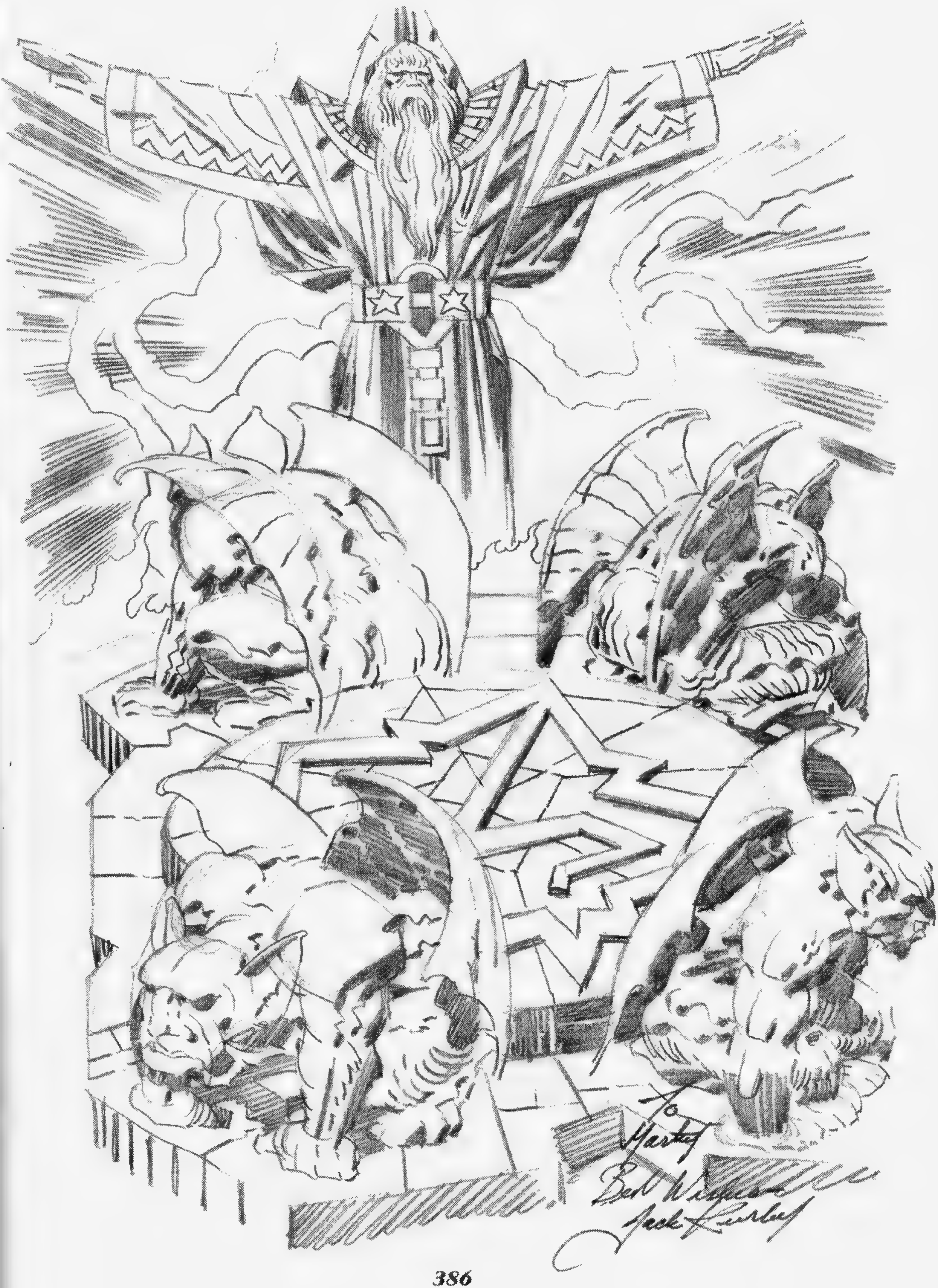
Very few artists use another fairly old technique, designing the picture in terms of directional thrusts. Almost no artists use optical composition or compositional color.

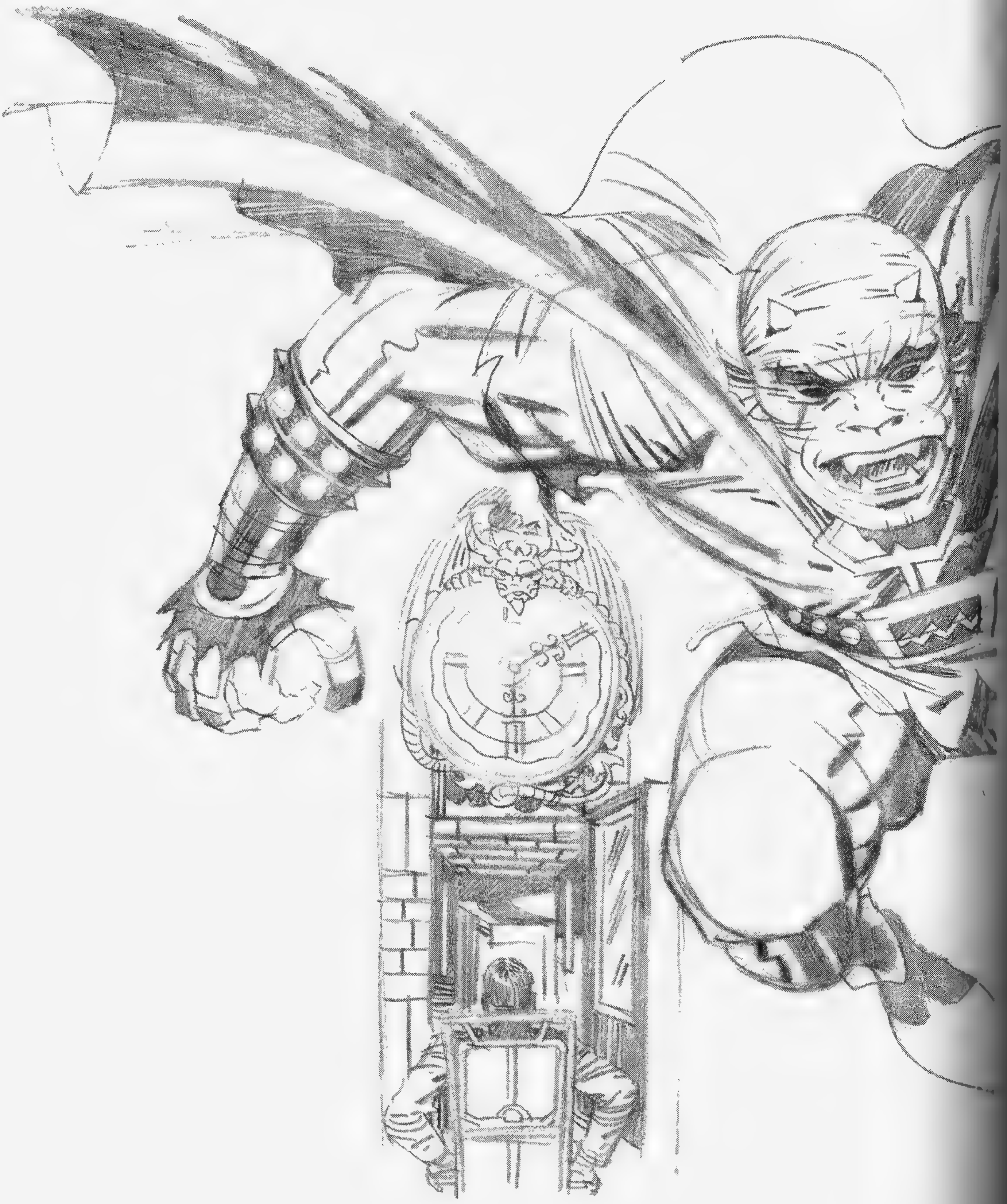
Some artists, like Steve Ditko, will fill up the pencilled page with nothing but outline - leaving the solid blacks to the discreation of the inker. Others, like John Buscema and Jim Steranko, do a complete, finished drawing with all the areas of solid black indicated. Some artists, like Gil Kane or Steranko, do layouts first, then proceed to pencil, working from their preliminaries. Others, like Jack Kirby, simply start in pencilling, perhaps making a preliminary line or two, then plunging right in.

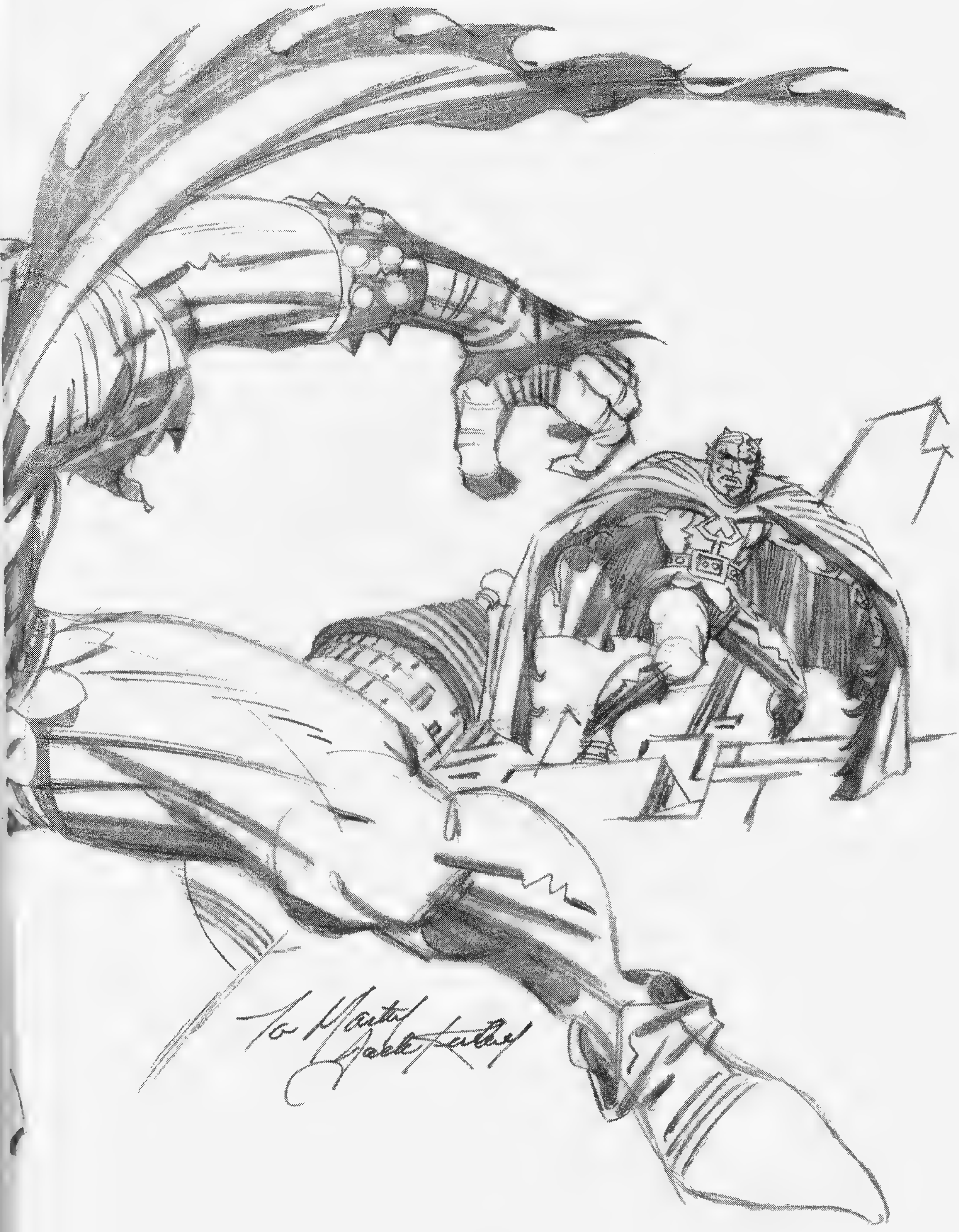
The Kirby pages which follow, illustrate Kirby's style. Almost no preliminary lines can be found upon scrutinizing the original - the pencils are pure line drawings, beautifully complete. The very speed and ease with which Kirby works is apparent in his forceful, stylized lines. The subtleties of tone work are entirely absent.

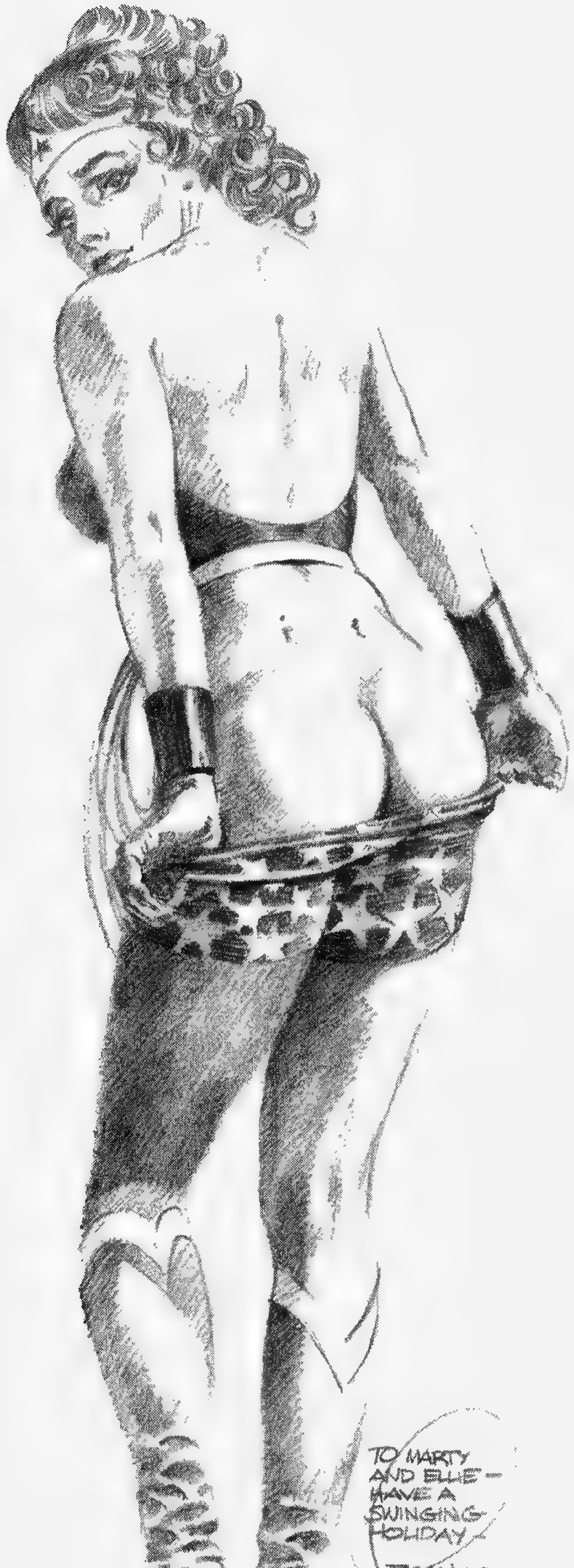
The drawing of Merlin was probably a left-over comic book page, while the dynamic Demon double pager was most likely a presentation piece to D.C. Demon fans will note that Kirby has eliminated the scallops on the cape, deleted the chest insignia and tunic effect and changed the spikes on The Demon's wrist bands to mere white circles - all to the detriment of the character's conceptual appearance.

The Steranko drawing of Wonder Woman is an extremely interesting one. At first glance, it may appear to be a tonal study, but it actually is composed of many fine lines, one on top of the other, put on in layers which give the appearance of tonal drawing, but only the appearance. Since his appearance in comics, Steranko has moved from a fairly stylized approach to pencilling, to a more realistic, "fine arts" style. However, even his most carefully crafted pencil studies fail to betray any use of tone - which creeps routinely into the most mundane line drawings of, say, Neal Adams.

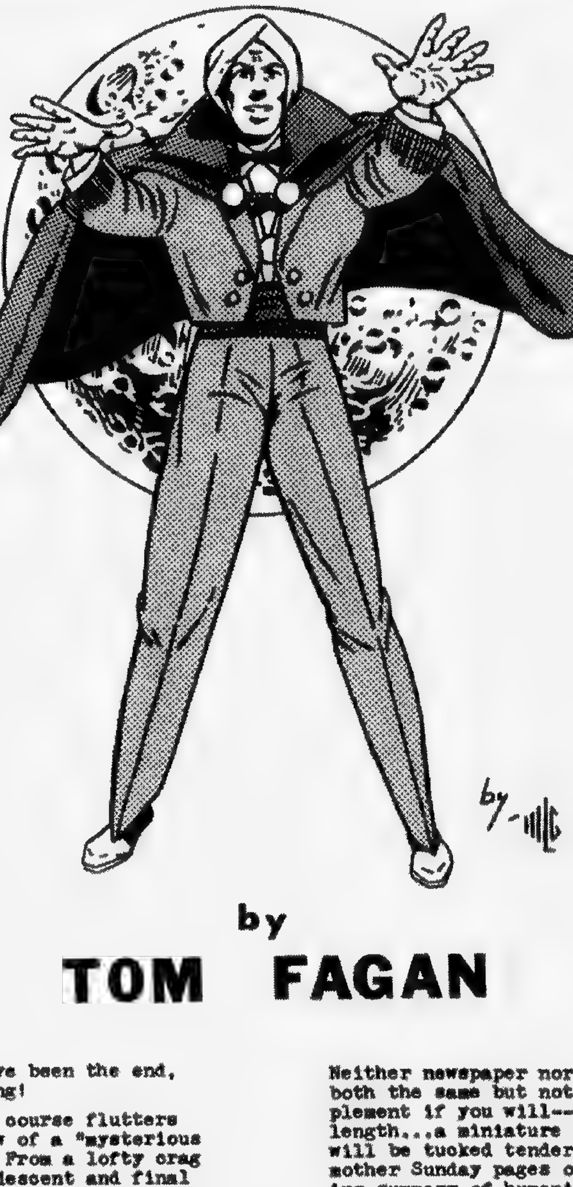

To Marty
Best Wishes
Jack Kirby




To Martin
Jack Kirby


TO MARTY AND ELLIE — HAVE A SWINGING HOLIDAY
—STERANKO

SAVE US MAGICIAN, CRIED WE AND CAME THE ANSWER ..."I FAILED TO SAVE THE ONE THING I LOVED MOST!"



by

TOM FAGAN

By rights it should have been the end, but it was the beginning!

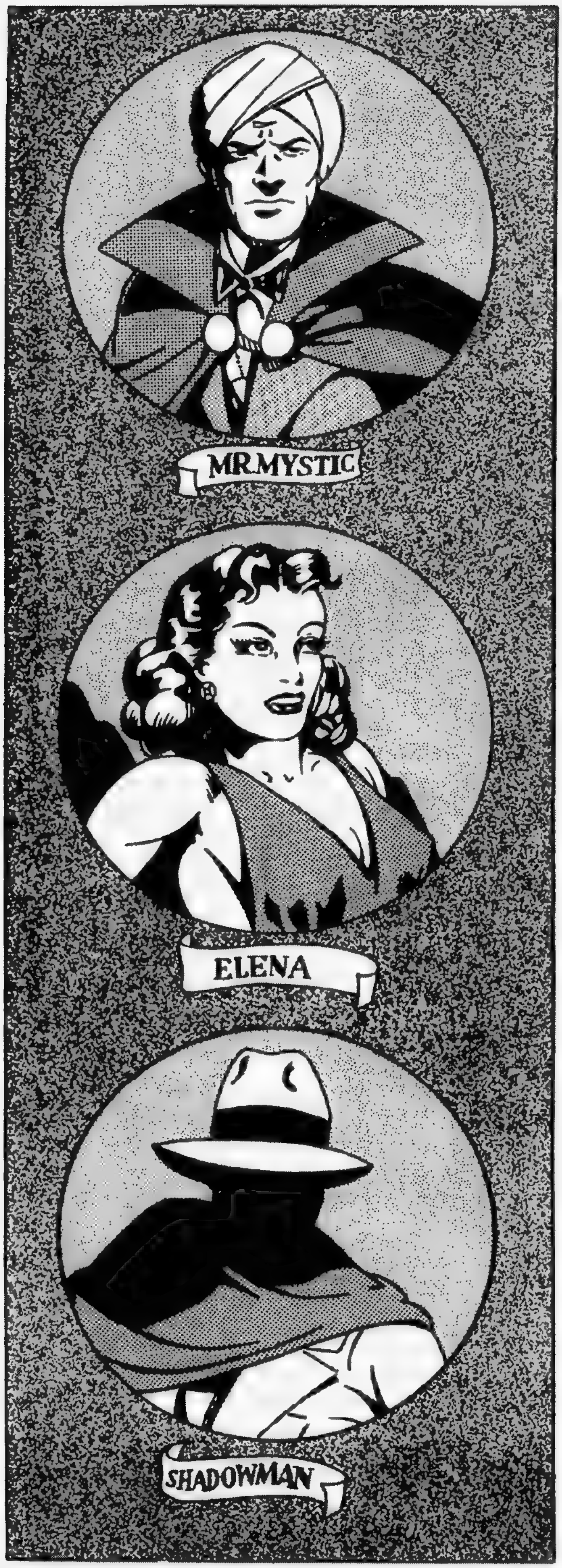
A tiny plane blown off course flutters helplessly into the maw of a "mysterious canyon somewhere in the Himalayas." From a lofty crag far overhead, almond eyes study the descent and final crash. "Look, An Omen!" softly breathes an excited companion and together the two rush to inform five other Orientals gathered about a warming fire inside a pagoda that: "Brothers! Hear! It Is Time Our Prophet Has Come!"

It is June 2nd, 1940. Mr. Mystic is about to be born. Seventy centuries have awaited his coming. The world trembles, without quite knowing why. Seven monks alone know the reason why.

The setting is colorful, wild and outrageous. As fantastic as only that true spawn of American culture... the comic strip...can make it. Yet it is a bastard scion that shall birth the latest savior of mankind. Neither newspaper nor comic book; still the strip is both the same but not quite either. Call it a supplement if you will---the first being 16 pages in length...a miniature comic book that for years to come will be tucked tenderly tween the folds of mammoth mother Sunday pages of your favorite seventh-day reading summary of humanity's harrangues and hurrahs of the week just past.

Out tumbles Supplement One and before your eyes is The Spirit..."America's only middle class crime fighter" and "truly adult character," he'll be called later. But this is 1940 remember and you simply read to enjoy, not discourse learnedly. Ah, then luscious, leggy Lady Luck-lovable lust object; but like she's a lady, man, so dispense with the longing...could there be more. La! the best is yet to come...at least in those early issues he was the grandest.

In art and story line (Will Eisner nonwithstanding) none could best the lord of legerdemain, the sovereign



of sorcery...The master magician Mr. Mystic materializes...

This is his story---or rather part of it---for one need not know everything about a man to understand him...no, one only has to recognize a portion of the psyche to perceive future fullfillment or succeeding sorrow.

Here then is the tale of Mr. Mystic. Of what happened to him between that first Sunday in June of 1940 until another Sunday, this one dated March 2nd, 1941.

It isn't particularly long recounting. Less than a year is involved and then only certain happenings will be told. It isn't particularly important either... unless you consider the life of a single individual to be of import.

If you read on not only will you make the acquaintance of Mr. Mystic, you'll meet Madam Elena, The Shadowman, Penny Douglas and others who touched upon one another's lives to a lesser or greater degree.

You agree? Splendid! Now judge then for yourself. It begins here. You are back in 1940. The United States isn't yet involved...but: "Like An Angry Flood, The Second World War Surges Across Europe, Engulfing All That Lies Before It...Small Countries, Peaceful For Centuries, Are Swept Into The Maelstrom And Destroyed"...

Evacuation in the path of the oncoming unidentified invader. Planes taxing frantically. An American (Ken) realizes a premier official is being left behind. "Quick, Professor! Take My Place In The Plane! You're A Genius...The World Needs You...I'm Just An Attache!"

However, Prof. Padewsik demurrs only to have his objections overruled by an American right to the chin and unconscious is carried aboard the waiting skycraft.

Left behind, Ken discovers that the Premier has dropped his "memoirs." "These Scraps Of Paper May Eventually Bring Peace. I've Got To Get Them Back To Him!" He also realizes, as the story relates, that he will be in "a real pickle!" if he is captured with the papers on his person.

Ken dashes to an abandoned hanger and "luckily he finds a plane left there." Admist shot and shell and general hell, the plane noses into the air and as Dorothy's cyclone pitched her into Oz, Ken is flung into the less heavenly retreat of a Himalaya canyon... all the more remarkable because his plane was a standard model and certainly not a long-distance tripper!

Is it chance, or was it foreordained this strange course of events? No matter, a hero is about to be born. For as a high priest reads from an ancient scroll: "As It Is Written In The Book Of Ages: On The Seventh Hour After Sunset, On The Day In The Seventh Month In The Seventieth Century After Our Deity's Death, Our Prophet Shall Come To Us From The Sky! Aye! Verily, It Is He!"

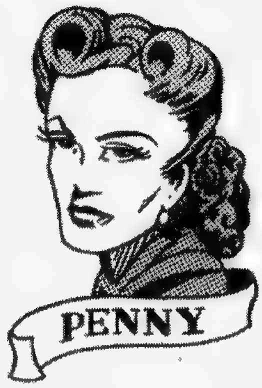
A sharp command: "Quick Bring Him Here! We Shall Brand Him With Our Sign And Make Him All Powerful! Fetch Him!" An order carried out with swiftness! Avows the priest: "After We Burn The Symbol On His Forehead, The Mysteries Of Life Shall Be Known To Him!"

Heated iron bites deep into skin; a cabalistic marking cauterized for a lifetime. The pronouncement..."With This Brand, I Name Thee Ruler Of Magic, Disciple Of The Seven Lamas And Knight Of Righteousness!"

Pain-shocked awareness...an awake and angry American. At his wish, restraining bonds melt away. Lamas and Pagoda disappearing from view. Another miracle...at a thought, the wrecked plane is fully restored. And: "Suddenly Ken Finds Himself Clothed And A Great Voice Booms From The Sky...' You Will Be Known As Mr. Mystic, Endowed With Unlimited Powers To Combat The Forces Of Evil Plaguing The Earth. Go And Do Your Work!'"

Strange and colorful is his rainment. A turban of safforn swathes the head. An ankle length, wide flared collared cape is bound at the throat with a golden chain. About the neck, a mystic amulet of ocher. A shirt of immaculate whiteness, with contrasting dress bowtie of black. A mess jacket of brilliant blue. A scarlet cumberbund to compliment the cape. Knife creased trousers matching the jacket's hue. But most conspicioius of all, the forehead brand startling in its raised and reddened flesh.

This is Mr. Mystic, whose adventures will continue weekly in Sunday newspaper supplement form until May 14, 1944. The beginning stories have the name, "W. Morgan Thomas," signed to them. Don't be fooled, the author and artist is really that late great of comic



art, S. R. (Bob) Powell!

Powell will do the Mystic strip for some two years (Oct. 3, 1943, was the last issue with his name on it.) before being called into the armed services. Stories thereafter will be by Fred Guardineer. However, it is Powell, who'll bring the strip into prominence. You'll find his name signed on the last panel of the second story (June 9, 1940) but later it will be moved up to its rightful place beneath the main logo. And there will come a time when the Powell signature will end with the flourish of Mr. Mystic's brand as part of the overall penmanship! The Creator and the Comic are one!

Perhaps, that last statement is a bit flamboyant, but Mr. Mystic did continue on to be one of the most popular magician strips of its time and it was competing against such series as Yarko The Great (an earlier Eisner creation) Zatara, Zambini, El Carim, Nagaf The Terrible, The Wizard, Tor-The Magic Master, and others. (Truly the magician ruled throughout the land in those halycon days!)

There is Natural Magic; there is Black Magic; there is the Magic of Love...before we speak of all three shall we investigate if the trust of the Seven Lamas and the confidence of the "Great Voice" were well placed?

It was and more! Still writing "My Plea of Peace To The World" was Professor Padewski, now secluded in an Alpine village. Bent on his assassination are two assassins who had failed in the attempt once before. Mr. Mystic confronts the trembling duo, as their chieftain is apparently airborne and speeding away to comparative safety. Suddenly, a mountain-high Mr. Mystic appears and with a gesture, turns the plane into a bird. "YEEOW!" screams the leader, plunging thousands of feet earthward.

Who is right...the peacenick of the 70's or the patriot of the 40's? Your choice, man. Mr. Mystic's philosophy..."I Should Kill You Like Your Leader, But You Have An Excuse For Ignorance." (Even Mr. A would have cause to smile at such a naive statement as that!)

In the beginning Mr. Mystic's powers were infallible... well, mostly so...the grand lama may have overlooked a thing or two. However, Mr. Mystic could do such things as turn an ordinary squirrel into a steed for riding; or transform himself into a mountain goat to skip across crags at will; become invisible; walk through walls and allow others to do so; grow gargantuan or shrink to sliver height, fly through the air or teleport himself by thought wherever he pleased... sometimes merely by wishing it so, other times by intense concentration, or by relying on the amulet, even resorting to plain old-fashion parlor magic... and, if all else failed, a hard right to an opponent's jaw proved as effective as any magic known to man or demon.

However, it was a woman who taught Mr. Mystic the most powerful enchantment of all---the magic of love. Her name was Elena...a raven-haired beauty.

They would meet as sworn enemies, only to fall in love and know a romance that would rage across continents, literally touch the moon and even transgress the boundaries of death itself.

The story line was Powell at his best and he began it in the second Mr. Mystic adventure dated June 9, 1940. A million dollar reward has been offered for the capture of Karoly Gore, a dictator and "Europe's Most Powerful Man." Mr. Mystic wants the reward, not for monetary gain, but because, "That Money Could Do Lots Of Good In This Topsy-Turvy World!"

Yet Gore is not the real foe as Mr. Mystic soon discovers. It is Elena he must deal with, for the dictator is but her pawn. The three confront one another as Mr. Mystic declares solemnly, "I Have Pledged My Life To Overcome The Evil In This World, Such As You!"

The declaration is cut short. Elena has released a chain holding a chandelier and the heavy lamp crashes down on a turbaned head. Flight! That too cut short. Having recovered, Mr. Mystic transformed himself into a nimble-footed mountain goat. He scales high desolate peaks and assuming his old self, he warily approaches the hideaway where the pair have taken refuge.

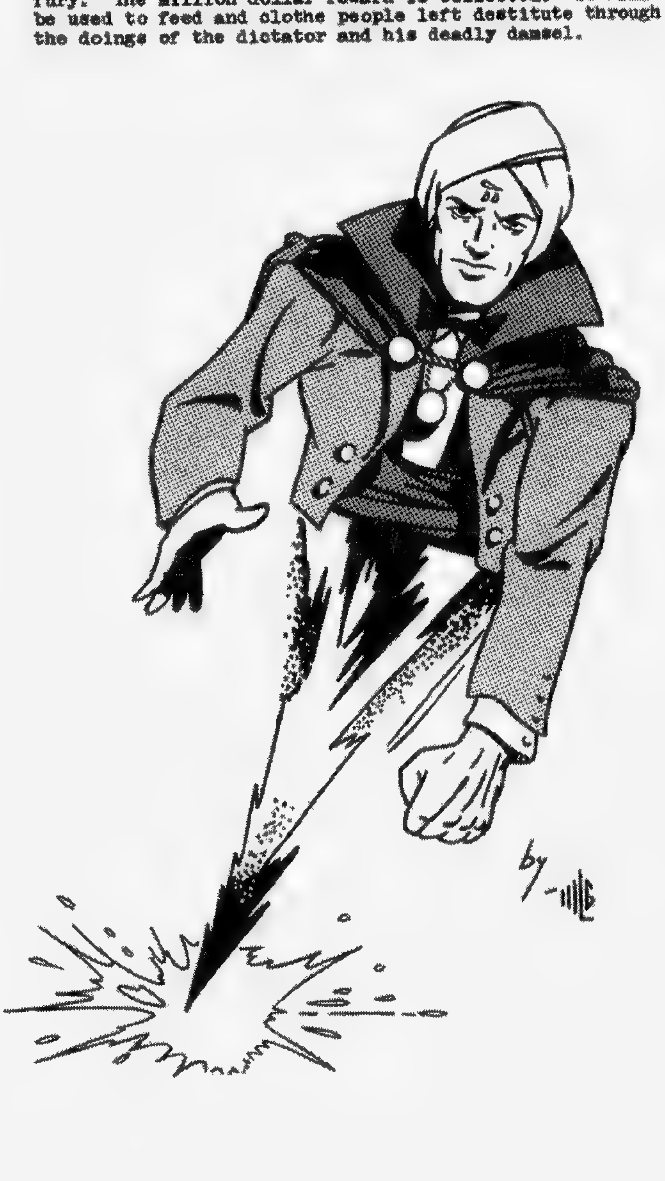
Elena's welcome? A machine gun spattering lethal lead, but, with a mere gesture of his hand, Mr. Mystic causes the weapon to melt like butter. Elena's next words are the understatement of all time..."His Magic Is Very Powerful! We've Got To Run...It's Our Only Chance!"

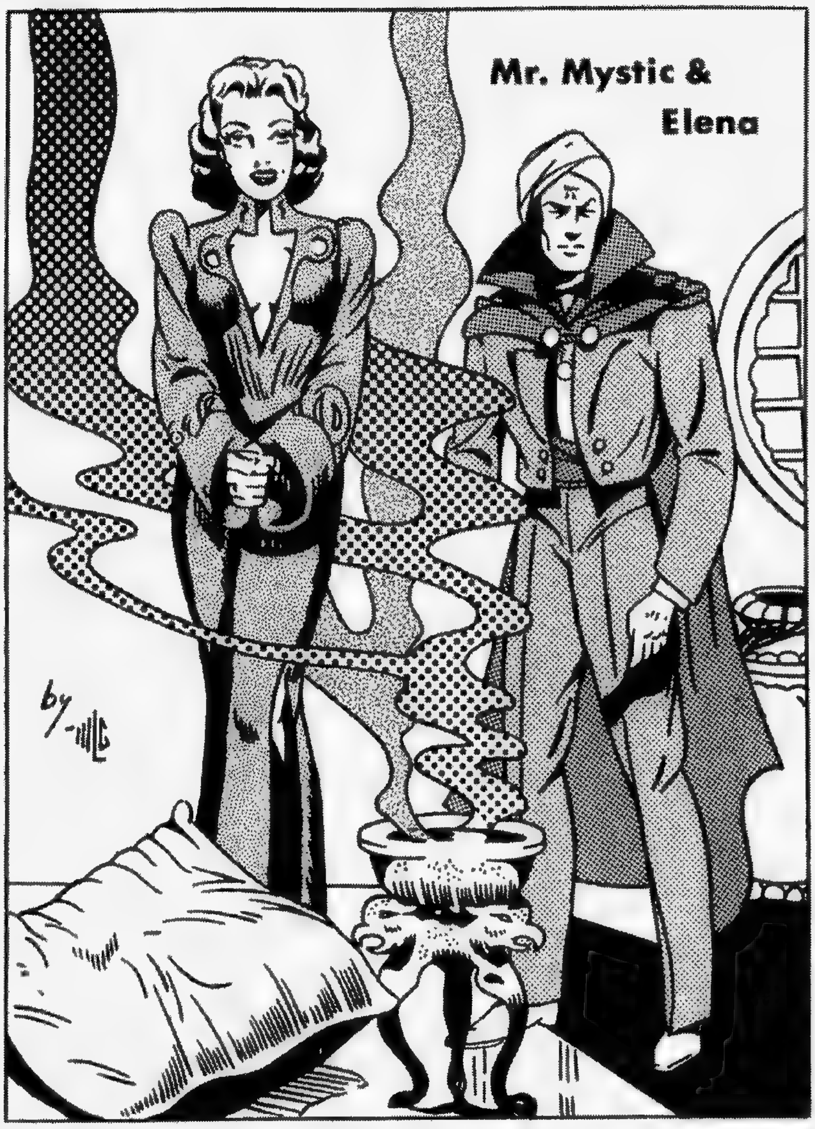
Run they do, but tiring of the chase, Mr. Mystic again raises his arm and the frightened dictator becomes a tree. At the edge of a cliff...Elena. Her stance is noble and defiant as she says, "I, Too, Know The Secrets Of Magic! You Can't Hurt Me With Your Spells. I'm Not Afraid Of You, Mr. Mystic!"

A brave statement that chills suddenly at the sight of a gun materializing in the magician's hand. Elena chooses death over apprehension and hurls herself over the precipice. The bottom of the abyss awaits far below!

Yet Hold! Mysterious words are whispered as Mr. Mystic rips the cloak from his shoulders. Miraculously, it flashes downward enfolding the falling Elena and carries her upwards to the waiting magician. A drawn knife changes to ropes binding the furious woman's wrists. A squirrel becomes a firey steed, carrying Mr. Mystic and Elena, while the defeated dictator Gore puffs wearily behind them...the destination prison.

"It's A Pity Your Disposition Doesn't Match Your Charming Face!" says Mr. Mystic to the now subdued female fury. The million dollar reward is collected. It will be used to feed and clothe people left destitute through the doings of the dictator and his deadly damsel.





Woman and magician will meet again soon, this time Elena practicing the magic of the temptress. "I've Loved You Ever Since I First Saw You! We Could Rule The World Together!" But Mr. Mystic is of stronger moral fiber. "With You, Never!" is his answer, as once again he defeats Elena and her new cohort in evil, the insidious Dr. Gung, creator of human robots, mindless beings subject to his command.

Elena may be evil personified and a direct contrast to the handsome magician who epitomizes goodness incarnate. Yet never was the saying, "Opposites attract," more true. Consider the story that appeared on July 21, 1940. Elena has been shot while trying to escape; an excited general has fired blindly. "Elena! Elena!" cries Mr. Mystic as he holds the fallen woman in his arms. "I'm Afraid This Is It, Mr. Mystic! M-My Only Regret Is That We Weren't On The Same Side...We Would Have Made Such A Good Pair...Such A..." Her voice trails off.

Now it is the magic of medicine that can alone save Elena. A two-hour wait seems an eternity to the anxious Mr. Mystic before he is told the doctor's verdict is that the woman will live. And Mr. Mystic reveals feelings perhaps hidden heretofore previously even to himself as he says, "Thank Heaven! She Is An Opponent, But A Brave One And I Admire Her!"

Is Elena really evil? Will she remain a daughter of treachery? The July 28, 1940, tale answers both questions. This time Elena makes use of magical powers she has constantly claimed yet never resorted to against Mr. Mystic. It is the showdown!

A formidable foe is this fabulous female. The curvaceous conjurer transforms a feather into a deadly condor. Elena's command: "Kill Your Prey!" Mr. Mystic counters by changing a gentle tabby cat into a bundle of feline fury, levitated into the air to kill with a vicious swipe of unsheathed claws.

As the bird's carcass drops to the floor, Elena changes it into a giant monster which upon destroying the cat turns then on Mr. Mystic. The magician, likewise, assumes mammoth height. In a tree-slinging melee the monster is killed and Mr. Mystic resumes his normal size.

It is the hour of truth. A downcast Elena confesses, "My Power Was Given Me By 'Cardin The Terrible,' With The Warning That If I Ever Was Beaten In A Match I'd Lose Any Magic I've Ever Known, And I Have."

"Cardin! That Fiend! No Wonder You Have Worked On The Side Of Evil So Long. Perhaps, We Can Save You Yet!" In a firm voice and with a magical passing of the hands, Mr. Mystic orders, "Then I Command You, Elena, To Return To Your Former Self, But This Time To Put Your Talents To Work On The Side Of Righteousness!"

Mr. Mystic for a second time holds Elena in his arms. There is no fear of death this time, only the promise of life...of two people wanting to be one. Mr. Mystic knows a new magic; it compels him to bend forward saying softly: "Ever Since I First Saw You, I Wanted To Do Something! Now The Time Has Come!" Only the full moon is witness to the enchantment of their kiss. And Elena responds...Magician and maiden, bewitched by the spell eternal!

What of Cardin? Dialogue and captions tells all in the August 4th, 1940, chapter. "You Are Evil, Cardin, And You Tried To Kill Elena! For That You Die! Shouts Mr. Mystic And Cardin Screams As He Turns To Sand..."

Swears Mr. Mystic, "Dust To Dust, Cardin! You Are Well Repaid!" Mute sand! A man carrying an unconscious woman flee. The repugnant sight of a castle vanishes, as a gesture from Mr. Mystic brings about a seering, raging holocaust. Sighs Elena, "Now Nothing Can Ever Take Me Away From You Again!" (Who could do less for one's fiancee; for truly she was on the path of righteousness and on the marriage trail of the master magician.)

What would take America to the 1960's to do, Elena and Mr. Mystic were to do 20 years earlier. Their courtship had rushed across the continents of Europe, North America, Africa and Asia, but it reached a high point (Sept. 1st, 1940) with a zoom to the moon. No national debt liability was entailed; just a minor threat to Elena's assets.

For the "King of the Moon" desired Elena and he was willing to trade "a rocket force powerful enough to destroy ten worlds" for her, to a Hindu bent on conquering the earth and crushing Mr. Mystic. He did neither. A grave in the gray void of space was his reward; an empty bridal chamber was the lot of the moon king, as fiancee and fakir whirled through the fourth dimension back to their own time and place on earth.

Keeping unwanted suitors from his beloved, became a fairly regular task for Mr. Mystic. Her latest admirer, as of Dec. 15th, 1940, was a Spanish prince, Don Juan De Leon. While any other woman might have been flattered by the attentions of royalty, Elena was less than impressed. Her Don Juan had been dead since A.D. July 10th, 1485! The phantom profligate was laid to rest with a firey finality...by a maddened Mr. Mystic, not an entrancing Elena.

Some people court death finding it desirable and having a magical attraction all of its own. One of these was Elena and as much as she loved her fiance...

The setting was in Portugal. A grand masquerade ball was in progress, that evening of Dec. 22nd, 1940. While Mr. Mystic performed parlor magic to amuse a society audience...Elena danced a waltz with a stranger whose face was hidden in shadow. They agree to a tryst in the garden.

Elena had only met the man that very afternoon...a chance encounter, while out costume shopping with her friend, Penny Douglas. An inkling that Penny cared for her friend's fiance is revealed in her reaction to Elena's engaging in conversation with the stranger. Penny scolds, "Engaged To A Man Like Mr. Mystic And She Can Flirt With Someone Else! What A Girl!"

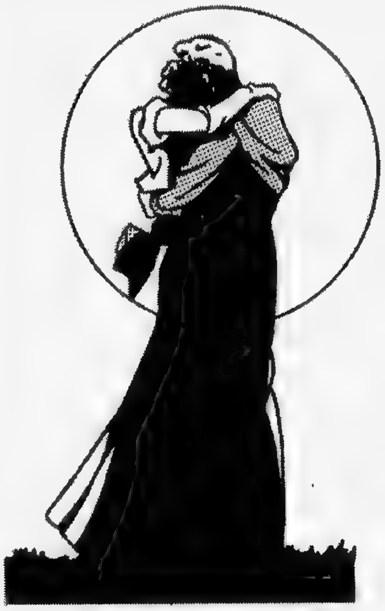
The stranger has charmed Elena. However, Mr. Mystic knows him for what he is. He has met him on at least two previous occasiins (stories dated Sept. 22nd and Oct. 20th, 1940). It is The Shadowman. He has another name, which the magician now reveals: "Elena, If You Wish To Break Up Our Engagement I'll Not Stop

You, But Don't Fool Around With This Man! Anyone Else, Elena, But Not Him! He's Death, Elena! Death! Do You Hear? If You Meet Him In The Garden It's The End Of Everything!..."

Elena refuses to listen. Mr. Mystic follows after her, but before he can catch up with her he is downed by a knife-wielding assassin. Penny Douglas saves him and at the same time makes known her true feelings: "The B-B-Big Lug! If He Had Hurt You, I'd-I'd Scratch His Eyes Out! W-Well? What Are You Waiting For? Your Precious Elena Is Keeping Her Rendevous...Get Going Before It's Too Late!" A new look crosses Mr. Mystic's face as he says, "Er...Yes...Of Course, Come On!"

They are too late. Even now The Shadowman holds Elena in his arms. "Do You Know Who I Am? Do You Know What This Means? You Can't Ever Turn Back!" Leaning forward to embrace him, Elena answers, "I Know, Yes! Take Me! I Love You! I've Loved You All My Life!" In shadow a kiss is exchanged...a magical moment suspended in moonlight, a lifetime of waiting consumed in a moment of eternity.

Arm in arm they walk away into deeper darkness, beneath a full moon. Turning for a wave of departure, The Shadowman calls out, "It's Too Late My Friend! She Belongs To Me Now! Don't Worry! I Promise You That She Shall Live In Eternal Happiness!"



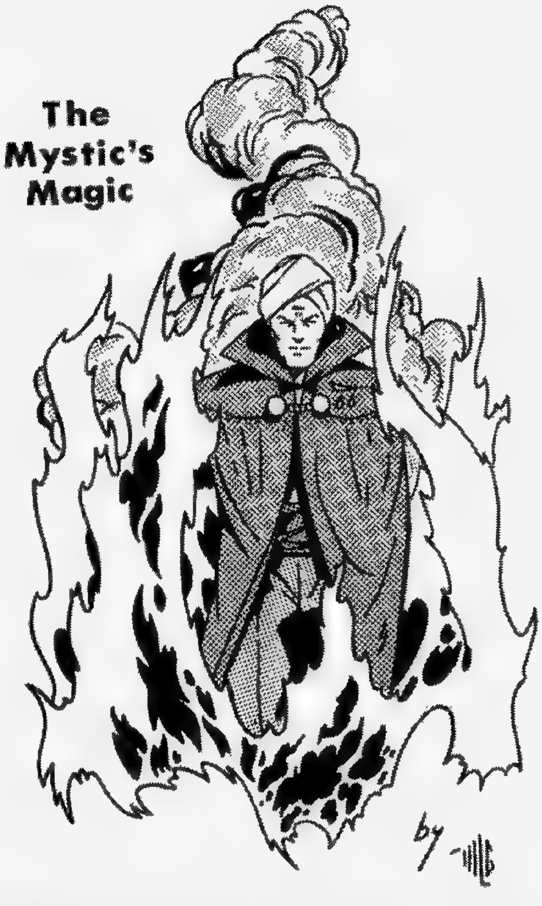
As Mr. Mystic's origin tale was reminiscent of "Lost Horizons," this story is remindful of "Death Takes A Holiday." A stunned Penny Douglas can only murmur, "Oh, Elena! Elena!" His grief almost too much to bear, Mr. Mystic stands, with head bowed, "We'll Never See Her Again, Penny, Not In This World Anyway...Goodby, Elena, Goodby! "SHE'S GONE! NOTHING CAN BRING HER BACK! I FAILED TO SAVE THE ONE THING I LOVED MOST!"

Grief has a way of healing, and soon, with Penny Douglas "as a constant companion," Mr. Mystic continues his "tireless fight against evil." Elena's name is mentioned in a March 2nd, 1941, conversation. "You Still Love Her Very Much, Don't You?" "No," replies Mr. Mystic..."I THOUGHT I Loved Her, But I Found Out I Was Wrong When I Met YOU, Penny...You've Shown Me The Real Thing!" He bends to kiss her, unaware a gun is pointed at his back.

What is romance, becomes horror. Lead tears along on a savage errand...a body slumps to the floor. "You KILLED him! You Killed MR. MYSTIC!" Words Penny repeats over and over as she grabs up a gun. "I Swore I'd Get Him For Sending Me To The Pen!" snarls Max Lucker in explanation..."Stop Looking At Me Like THAT!...I'll..." The sentence is never finished; the speaker is silenced forever!

A life slipping away. What magic is there to save it? What magic can possibly halt The Shadowman already escorting Mr. Mystic beyond the veil? Is the love of one woman and the respect of another more powerful than death itself? Are prayer and persuasion strong enough to restore the miracle of life?

Penny prays...there is nothing else she can do. And even so, Mr. Mystic's heartbeat falters. Adrenalin is administered. A physician's observation..."If He Doesn't React To This...It's The END!!" The heart is apparently still.



Yet a heart is a mystical thing...not bound by the limitations of blood and flesh. It can reach out to retrieve, to caress, to comfort, to heal. If one heart has the power for this, then how much wonder may be worked by three?

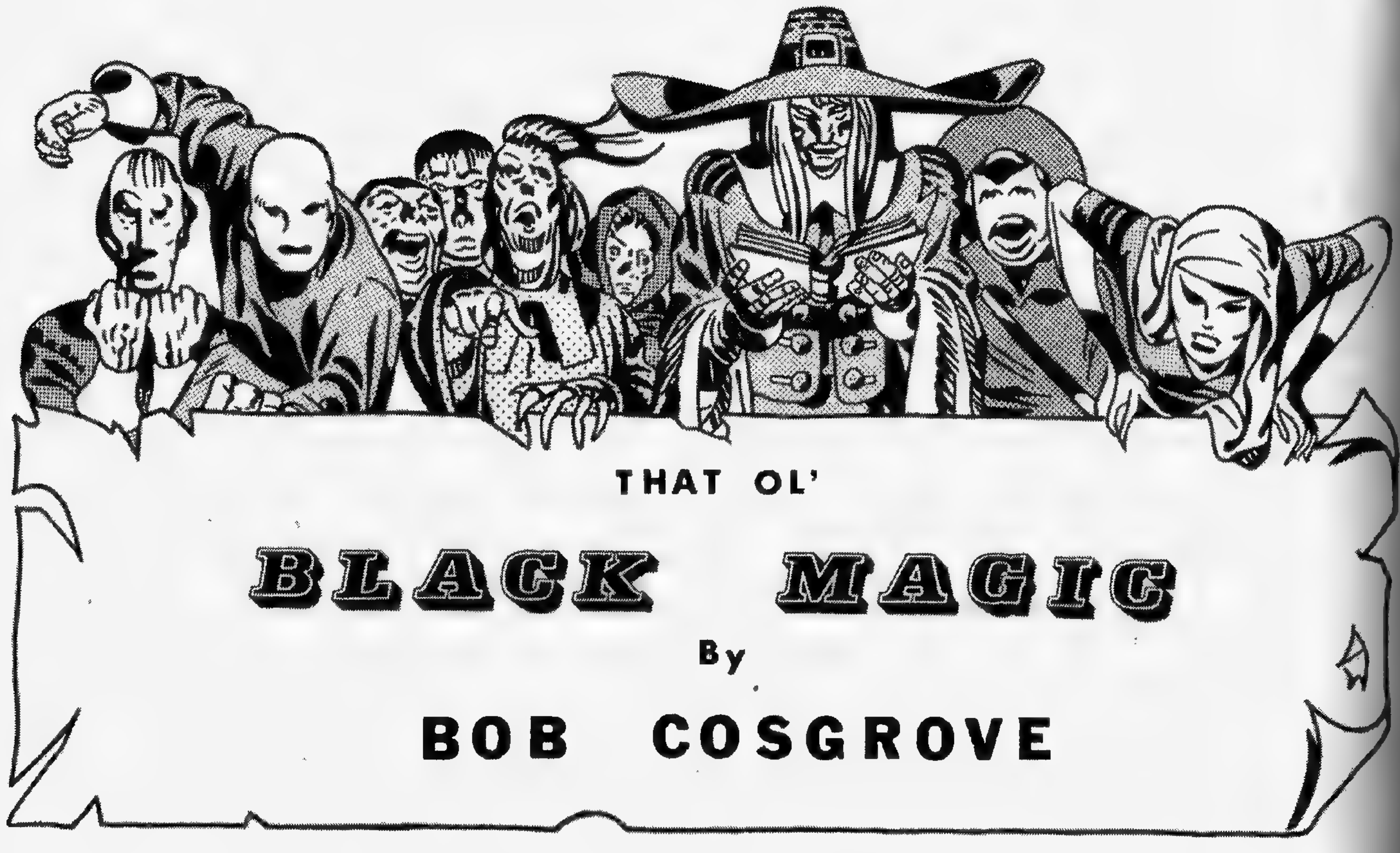
Mr. Mystic following The Shadowman saying he has forgotten to say goodbye to Penny. The cold answer, "That's All Right...In A Case Like This, People Aren't Expected To Say Goodbye!"

And at the entrance of the "Land of the Dead," Elena stands waiting. The first question Mr. Mystic asks is..."Are You Happy?" "Oh, Yes!!" she reassures him before turning to The Shadowman: "No! Wait!! Don't Take Him Across The River! You CAN'T CUT His Career So Short!! He's..." And surprisingly enough Death relents.

In life and love, Mr. Mystic and Penny are reunited. Watching from a spectral distance, Elena - her arm around The Shadowman; his hand in her's - says softly: "I'm So Glad You Let Him Go Back! There's A REAL Happy Ending...Thanks To You!" And the Shadowman answers, "Me Or YOU, Dear?"

By rights it should have been the end, but it was the beginning! Was there happiness ever after? That's another story to be recounted another time...another place.

Suffice to say, the magic lived on. Still lives on, in fact, in the minds of those who, on so many Sundays, were fortunate enough to have as their weekly visitor none other than...MR. MYSTIC!



THAT OL'

BLACK MAGIC

By

BOB COSGROVE

Recently, National Periodical Pub. Inc., announced that they were reviving a Simon & Kirby title published by Headline Publications in the early fifties. The title's name? BLACK MAGIC!

Although Jack Kirby is best known for his contributions to the cape-and-cowl world of the super hero, many of his most memorable achievements came in other genres: the Western, with Bullseye and the superlative Boy's Ranch, crime comics and even romance. Black Magic was the Kirby entry into the world of horror reigning supreme at EC, and eagerly entered by a host of EC imitators.

From the start, Simon & Kirby shunned the gory, blood and guts horror that EC's superlative artists made presentable and it's shoddy competition made simply disgusting. Emphasis in the Black Magic books focused on the sense of mystery that accompanied magic and the supernatural. The story stood on its own merits--not on the amount of red ink splattered from panel to panel. This policy was a mixed blessing. When Simon & Kirby were at their height, nothing could beat them. When they began to lose interest in the book, doing simply covers and a short plotless story, the powerful Simon & Kirby style still carried the book. When the pair left, however, their successors continued the policy of letting the stories stand on their own merits. Usually such merits were non-existent, and readers found themselves wishing for a bit of blood and thunder.

This then, is a brief survey of the title called Black Magic; one that will hit the high points and plumb the depths of the book, with special attention to stories that were of peculiar interest.

One such story appeared in the very second issue of Black Magic. Simon & Kirby introduce "Mr. & Mrs. Robert Clark," specialists in interpreting dreams. At the moment, they are busy helping a man named Edward Morrow, the victim of a terrible, recurring dream. In his nightmare, Morrow finds himself racing down an icy winter road, clad only in his pajamas, an old celluloid collar and tie. Reaching a colonial town, he seeks shelter, but an old Puritan named Joshua, his hostile features painted a macabre crimson, slams the door in Morrow's face.

In a second dream, Morrow finds himself the defendent in a trial conducted by monsters. As he pleads with his captors, they cry "bring in the girl!" Before the startled salesman, the monsters hurl a wretched, beaten girl who screams, "I confess! HE'S the man! Don't whip me anymore." The girl's accusation brings a concerted howl of triumph from the grotesque assemblage and Morrow finds himself borne aloft by a hoast of arms and hurried off in the ensuing chaos! He is bound to a post and stripped to the waist in the snow! A man detaches himself from the ghoulish crowd and moves menacingly toward Morrow with a whip in hand. "Sixteen lashes! Always sixteen lashes! I counted them between my clenched teeth in every one of the dreams that followed!"

How to explain the dream? That was Simon & Kirby's problem. They solved it by digging up an ordinary incident in Morrow's past. As a young, smooth-talking salesman, he had engaged in a clandestine romance with a simple young farm girl. When Morrow deserted her, her puritanical father learned of the forbidden romance and whipped the girl.

The idea of converting ordinary incidents into exotic symbols had tremendous possibilities. One had only to take, for example the number of days Morrow had known the girl, and insert them into the dream, and one had an exotic symbol of why sixteen lashes.

Simon and Kirby quickly recognized the story potential of the world of dreams. The Clark's became the prototype for Richard Temple, Dream Detective, and Morrow's story, "The Scorn of the Faceless People!" became the model for an entirely new book, "The Strange World of Your Dreams."

In the earliest and best issues of Black Magic, Simon & Kirby drew two of the stories and the cover. For example, in the same issue as the Morrow tale, S&K produced "The Cloak," a tale of a garment fashioned by Satan which brings violent death to any who wears it.

Most of the other artists who worked on Black Magic were competent story tellers, but rather unexciting. An exception was a frequent Simon & Kirby co-worker, Mort Meskin. Although Meskin could be disasterous inking Kirby's pencils, he was himself a brilliant penciller. His story telling style, built around medium shots, was as simple and direct as his inks, which were bold and powerful. Meskin had a particular mastery of composition and perspective, which gave his work the same sort of depth Kirby achieved through exaggeration and forced perspectives. Meskin was at his chilling best in telling simple stories with a chilling twist. It could be "The Cheerful Old Lady in Black," a lady named "Miss Smiles" who gives a rain-soaked lad a lift and turns out to be Death, on her way to pick up the boy's parents. Or, consider "A Curse On You," about Gideon Hodges, a nasty little man who can make people drop dead simply by wishing it.

An artist who sometimes collaborated with Meskin also soloed in several Black Magic Appearances. His name? Jerry Robinson, an integral part of the team that made Batman the sensation of the forties. Robinson's stories were well-illustrated, but usually unexciting.

Kirby's interest in were-beings was often apparent. In Black Magic #3, for example, he and Simon produced an 11 page story about a beautiful, silver-haired girl who became a white wolf, eventually shot by her lover. The basic story has been done many times, most recently perhaps by Reed Crandall in the pages of Warren Publications, but never more beautifully then Simon and Kirby drew it. Another were-tale was issue #27's "The Cat People." In this tale, a traveller in Spain visits with some gypsies. Not ordinary gypsies - satanists who play cat's cradle and are themselves transformed into screeching, clawing, satanic beasts. Kirby also used cat-people in his famous Captain 3-D series, and resumed the theme twenty years later when he introduced his Kamandi book.

That same issue carried an interesting tale of murder, paradox, and time travel, entitled "A Hole In His Head". The art is unsigned. In issue #29, the same artist has a tale entitled "Madame Cyanide and Mister Tricks," about one Nicholas Dana, who exposes phoney mediums. Sort of Black Magic's answer to Terence Thirteen. The withered old women, the mist shrouded mansions, the distinctive inks and emphasis on hand gestures and facial expression leave no doubt as to the artist's identity: it is Steve Ditko!

In spite of such treats as Ditko appearances, the overall quality of Black Magic was dropping, as Simon & Kirby drew only covers, and short interior stories. The lead story invariably carried the box "produced by Simon & Kirby," although many times it might, with equal veracity have proclaimed "produced by Cecil B. DeMille."

Some of the stories have acquired a retrospective interest. One such story is "As Real As Life" a lackluster production in a lackluster issue, Black Magic #24. A man buys a picture at an auction of belongings owned by a man who is reputed to be a sorcerer. The man's daughter claims to play in the picture. The father scoffs, but when his daughter disappears he asks the auctioneer, "didn't you say everything in that house was exorcised?"

He replies, "Everything but the picture you bought! On the day the house was purified, the picture wasn't there. It had been taken away to be repaired!"

So what? Well, make the picture a mirror, jazz up the story a bit, and have it illustrated by the talented Alexander Toth, and you have "The Devil's Doorway" in House of Mystery #182, published sixteen years after the Black Magic tale. You see, it isn't only artists who swipe!

Simon and Kirby left. EC died. But Black Magic continued into the sixties. Why? Who knows? Certainly not on the strength of covers, scripts, or even art, which occasionally featured unsigned art by familiar artists.

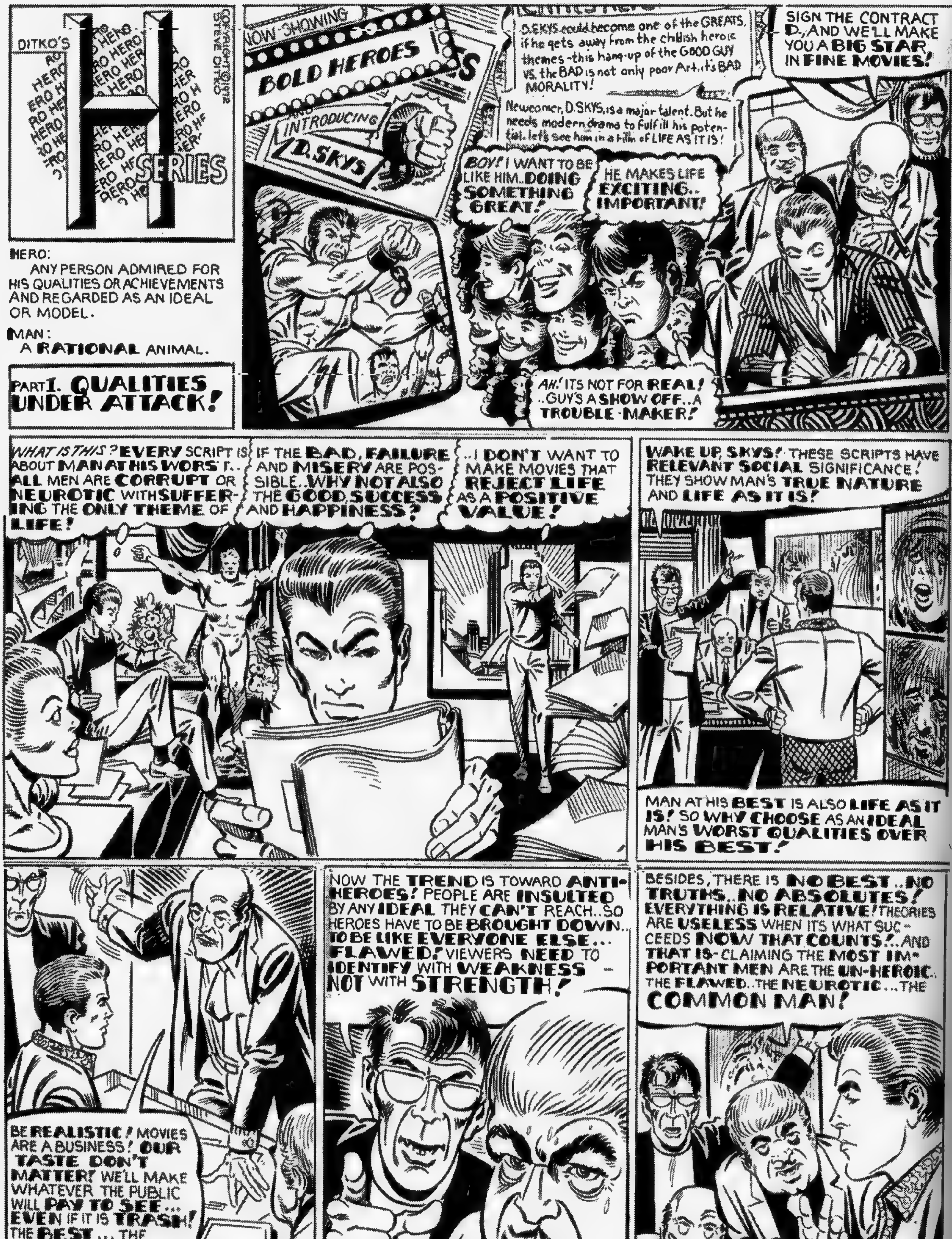
The stories never got better, though at the very end of Black Magic's life, they had switched from tales of the supernatural to 3rd rate science fiction yarns. The "saving grace" of the magazine's dying days was the acquisition of illustrator S. Robert Powell, of Mr. Mystic, Sheena, Queen of The Jungle and Man in Black called Fate fame. Powell filled the book with his competent story telling and his wonderfully expressive homely faces.

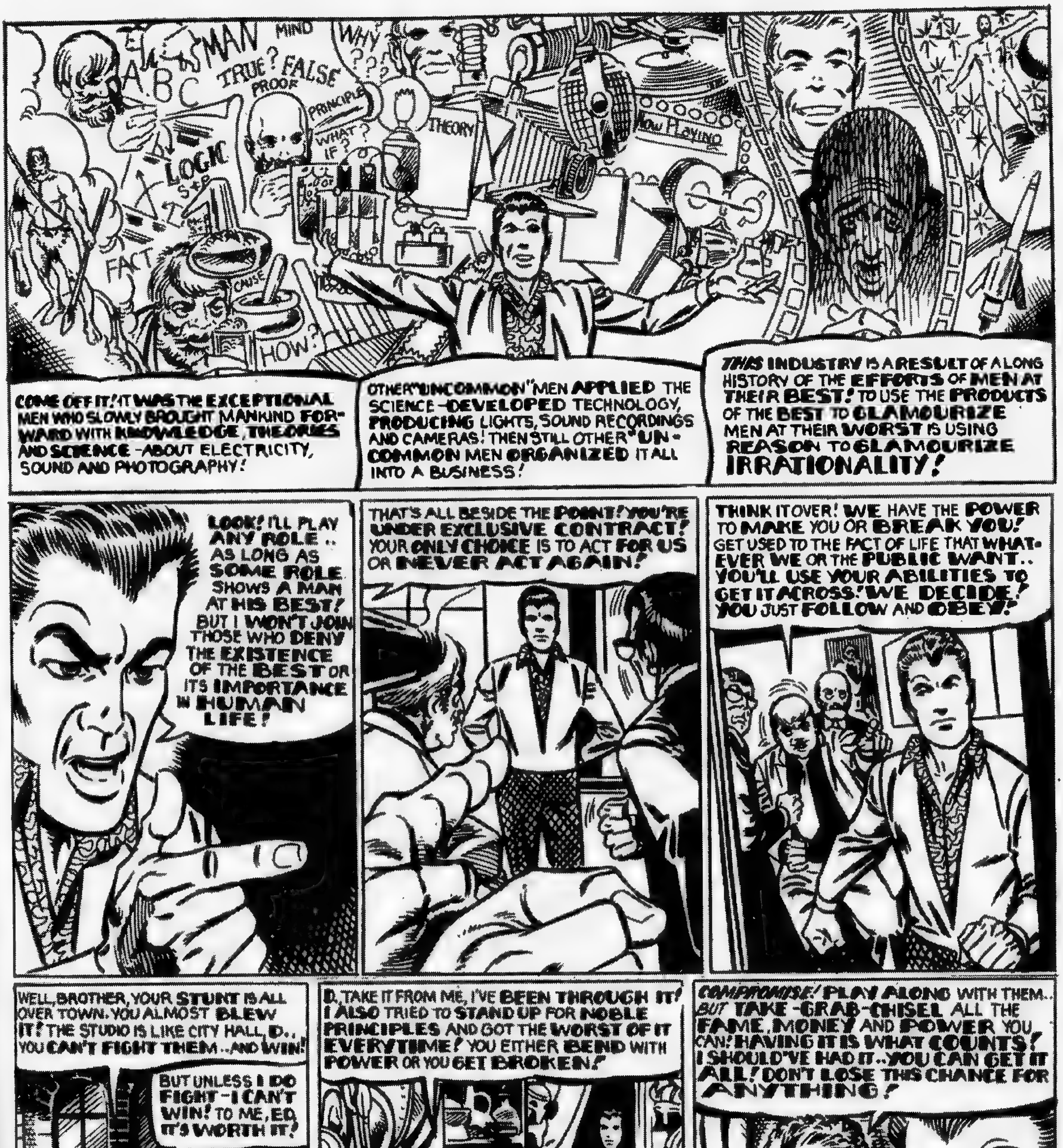
One such book was Black Magic Vol 8, No. 4. (Sept-Oct. 1961) This book had Powell stories from cover to cover. The first story, "Caged," dealt with an idea Marvel Comics used many times in their pre-super hero days...the changing of places between human and caged animal. In this case, gorillas from another planet captured two circus owners and put them on display on their planet. The next story, "The Monster," also dealt with a much used theme...an alien coming to earth to eliminate all disease and is mistakenly attacked as a monster.

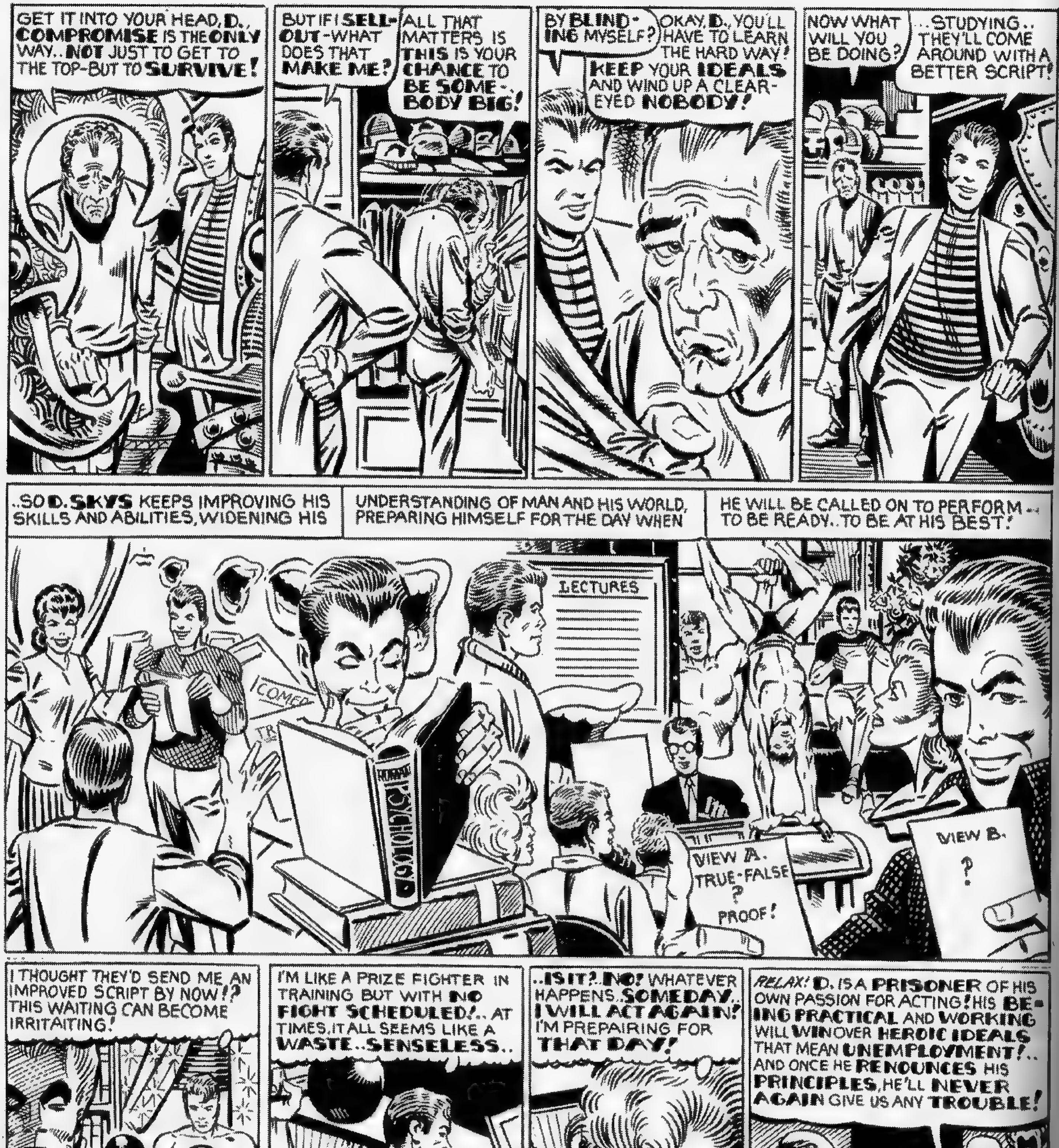
The other three stories in that issue were "The Companion," "The Carrier," and "Earth's Core." They were fairly original in their presentation and dealt with a robot problem on earth, a plague carrier in the year 2032 and a mining machine. None of these stories, as you can see, had anything to do with Black Magic.

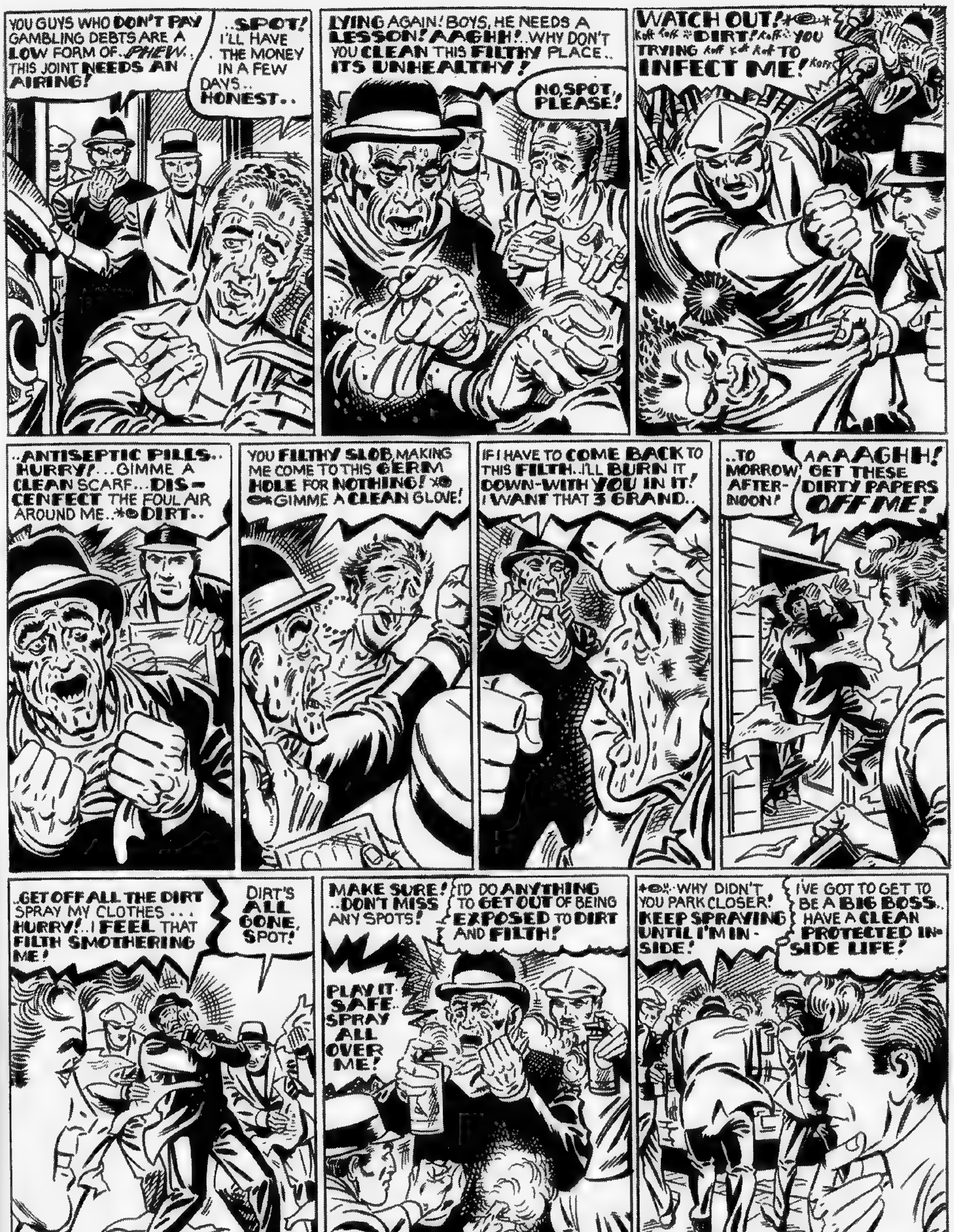
Black Magic finally faded from the newstands. Nobody missed it, but if its return at D.C. means a return to the Simon & Kirby fare of the earliest issues, a number of people will welcome its return.

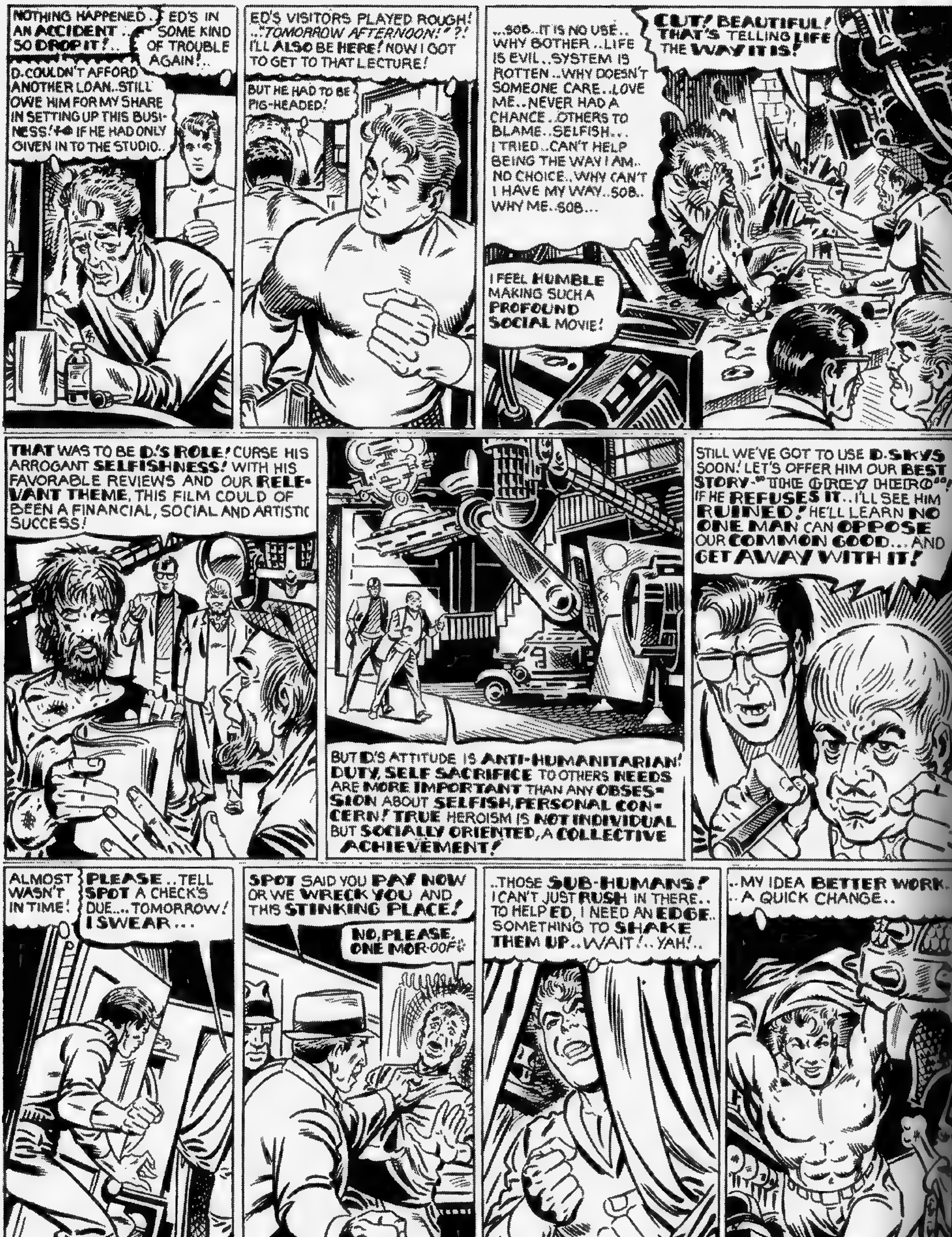
Wayne
·70 Pond

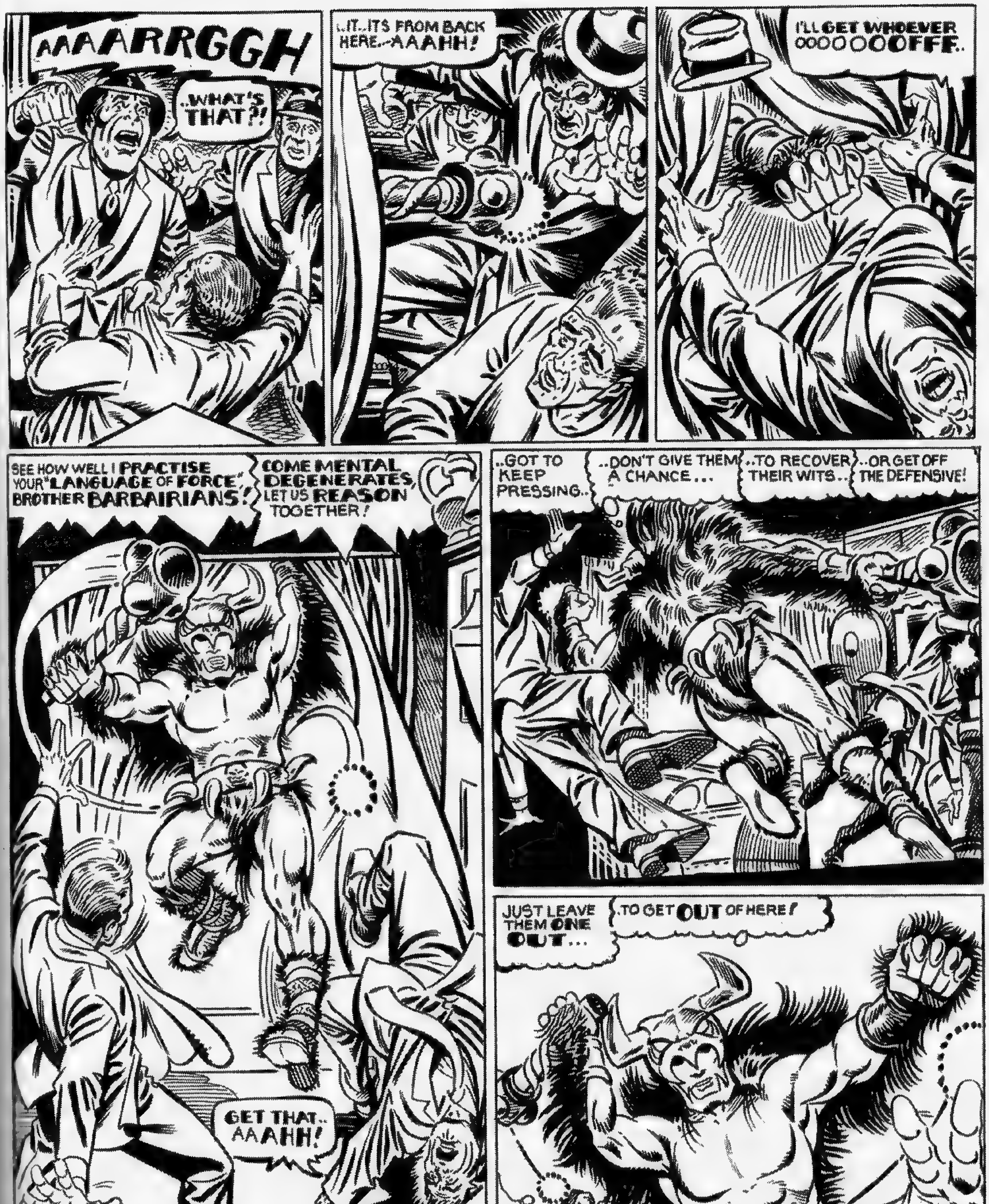

DITKO'S
H SERIES
HERO HERO HERO
COPYRIGHT ©1972 STEVE DITKO
HERO: ANY PERSON ADMIRED FOR HIS QUALITIES OR ACHIEVEMENTS AND REGARDED AS AN IDEAL OR MODEL.
MAN: A RATIONAL ANIMAL.
PART 1. QUALITIES UNDER ATTACK!
NOW SHOWING
BOLD HEROES
INTRODUCING
D. SKYS
D.SKYS could become one of the GREATS, if he gets away from the childish heroic themes -this hang-up of the GOOD GUY VS. the BAD is not only poor Art, it's BAD MORALITY!
Newcomer, D.SKYS, is a major talent. But he needs modern drama to fulfill his potential. let's see him in a film of LIFE AS IT IS!
BOY! I WANT TO BE LIKE HIM..DOING SOMETHING GREAT!
HE MAKES LIFE EXCITING.. IMPORTANT!
AH! ITS NOT FOR REAL! ..GUY'S A SHOW OFF..A TROUBLE-MAKER!
SIGN THE CONTRACT D., AND WE'LL MAKE YOU A BIG STAR IN FINE MOVIES!
WHAT IS THIS? EVERY SCRIPT IS ABOUT MAN AT HIS WORST.. ALL MEN ARE CORRUPT OR NEUROTIC WITH SUFFERING THE ONLY THEME OF LIFE!
IF THE BAD, FAILURE AND MISERY ARE POSSIBLE..WHY NOT ALSO THE GOOD, SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS?
..I DON'T WANT TO MAKE MOVIES THAT REJECT LIFE AS A POSITIVE VALUE!
WAKE UP, SKYS! THESE SCRIPTS HAVE RELEVANT SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE! THEY SHOW MAN'S TRUE NATURE AND LIFE AS IT IS!
MAN AT HIS BEST IS ALSO LIFE AS IT IS! SO WHY CHOOSE AS AN IDEAL MAN'S WORST QUALITIES OVER HIS BEST!
BE REALISTIC! MOVIES ARE A BUSINESS! OUR TASTE DON'T MATTER! WE'LL MAKE WHATEVER THE PUBLIC WILL PAY TO SEE...EVEN IF IT IS TRASH! THE BEST...THE GOOD IS WHATEVER SELLS!
NOW THE TREND IS TOWARD ANTI-HEROES! PEOPLE ARE INSULTED BY ANY IDEAL THEY CAN'T REACH..SO HEROES HAVE TO BE BROUGHT DOWN.. TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE... FLAWED! VIEWERS NEED TO IDENTIFY WITH WEAKNESS - NOT WITH STRENGTH!
BESIDES, THERE IS NO BEST..NO TRUTHS..NO ABSOLUTES! EVERYTHING IS RELATIVE! THEORIES ARE USELESS WHEN ITS WHAT SUCCEEDS NOW THAT COUNTS!..AND THAT IS-CLAIMING THE MOST IMPORTANT MEN ARE THE UN-HEROIC, THE FLAWED..THE NEUROTIC...THE COMMON MAN!
1

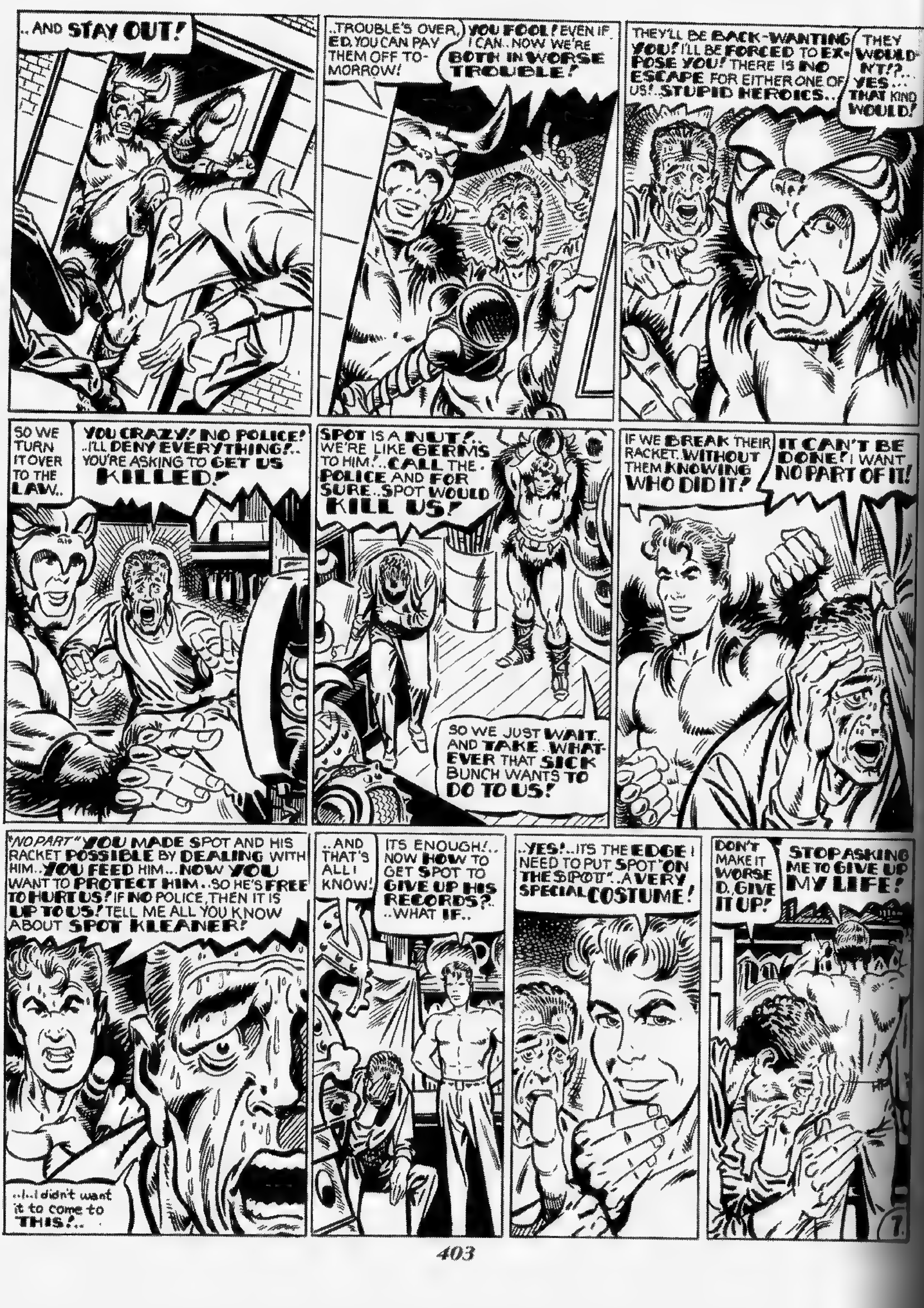

MAN
MIND
A.B.C
TRUE? FALSE
PROOF
WHY???
PRINCIPLE
WHAT IF?
THEORY
LOGIC
FACT
CAUSE
HOW?
NOW PLAYING
COME OFF IT! IT WAS THE EXCEPTIONAL MEN WHO SLOWLY BROUGHT MANKIND FORWARD WITH KNOWLEDGE, THEORIES AND SCIENCE - ABOUT ELECTRICITY, SOUND AND PHOTOGRAPHY!
OTHER "UNCOMMON" MEN APPLIED THE SCIENCE - DEVELOPED TECHNOLOGY, PRODUCING LIGHTS, SOUND RECORDINGS AND CAMERAS! THEN STILL OTHER "UNCOMMON MEN ORGANIZED IT ALL INTO A BUSINESS!
THIS INDUSTRY IS A RESULT OF A LONG HISTORY OF THE EFFORTS OF MEN AT THEIR BEST! TO USE THE PRODUCTS OF THE BEST TO GLAMOURIZE MEN AT THEIR WORST IS USING REASON TO GLAMOURIZE IRRATIONALITY!
LOOK! I'LL PLAY ANY ROLE.. AS LONG AS SOME ROLE SHOWS A MAN AT HIS BEST! BUT I WON'T JOIN THOSE WHO DENY THE EXISTENCE OF THE BEST OR ITS IMPORTANCE IN HUMAN LIFE!
THAT'S ALL BESIDE THE POINT! YOU'RE UNDER EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT! YOUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO ACT FOR US OR NEVER ACT AGAIN!
THINK IT OVER! WE HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE YOU OR BREAK YOU! GET USED TO THE FACT OF LIFE THAT WHATEVER WE OR THE PUBLIC WANT.. YOU'LL USE YOUR ABILITIES TO GET IT ACROSS! WE DECIDE! YOU JUST FOLLOW AND OBEY!
WELL, BROTHER, YOUR STUNT IS ALL OVER TOWN. YOU ALMOST BLEW IT! THE STUDIO IS LIKE CITY HALL, D., YOU CAN'T FIGHT THEM.. AND WIN!
BUT UNLESS I DO FIGHT - I CAN'T WIN! TO ME, ED, IT'S WORTH IT!
SKY'S · COSTUME · PROPS Rental
D., TAKE IT FROM ME, I'VE BEEN THROUGH IT! I ALSO TRIED TO STAND UP FOR NOBLE PRINCIPLES AND GOT THE WORST OF IT EVERYTIME! YOU EITHER BEND WITH POWER OR YOU GET BROKEN!
COMPROMISE! PLAY ALONG WITH THEM.. BUT TAKE - GRAB - CHISEL ALL THE FAME, MONEY AND POWER YOU CAN! HAVING IT IS WHAT COUNTS! I SHOULD'VE HAD IT.. YOU CAN GET IT ALL! DON'T LOSE THIS CHANCE FOR ANYTHING!
2.

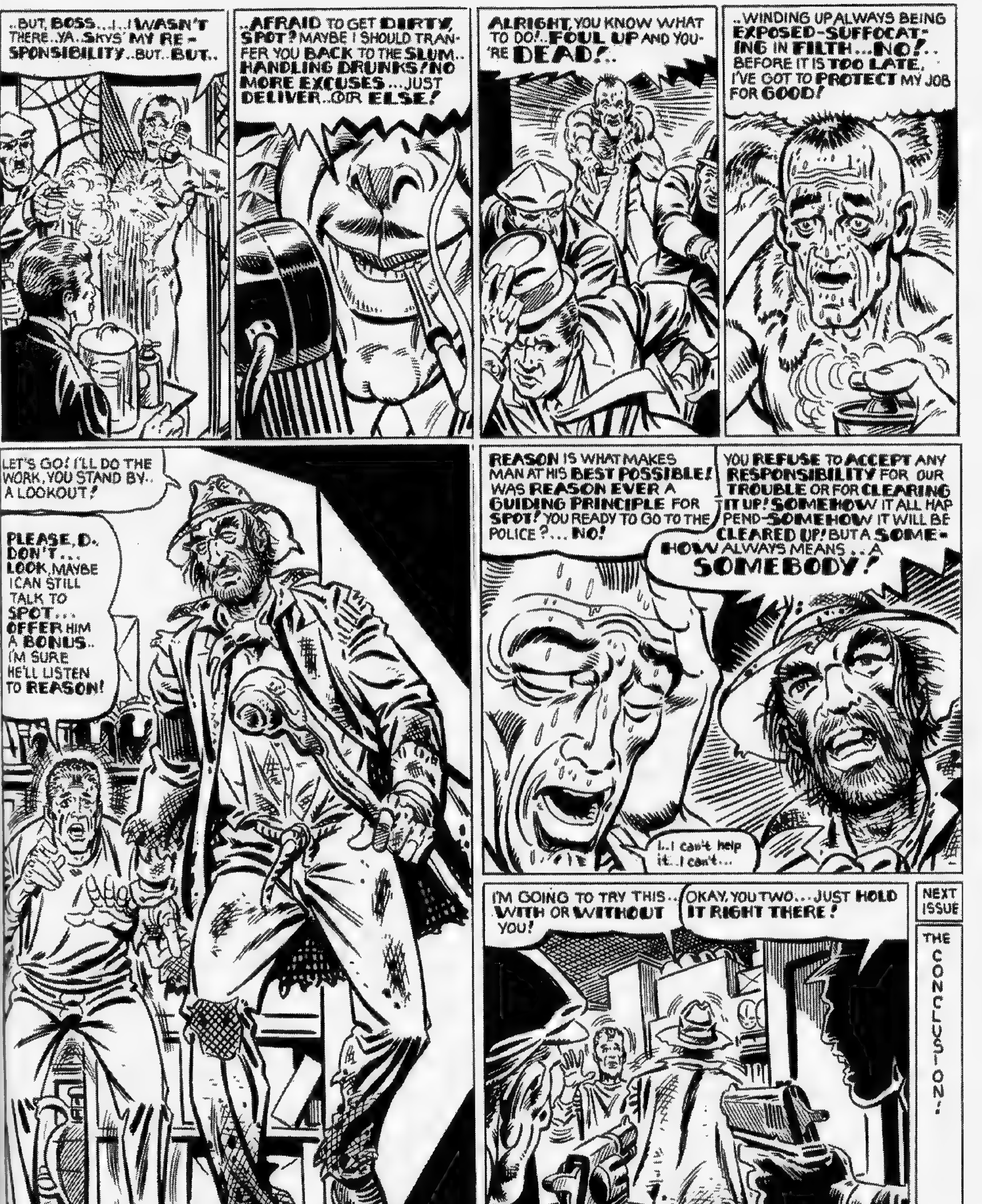

GET IT INTO YOUR HEAD, D.. COMPROMISE IS THE ONLY WAY.. NOT JUST TO GET TO THE TOP-BUT TO SURVIVE!
BUT IF I SELL-OUT-WHAT DOES THAT MAKE ME?
ALL THAT MATTERS IS THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO BE SOMEBODY BIG!
BY BLINDING MYSELF?
OKAY, D., YOU'LL HAVE TO LEARN THE HARD WAY! KEEP YOUR IDEALS AND WIND UP A CLEAR-EYED NOBODY!
NOW WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING?
..STUDYING.. THEY'LL COME AROUND WITH A BETTER SCRIPT!
..SO D. SKYS KEEPS IMPROVING HIS SKILLS AND ABILITIES, WIDENING HIS
UNDERSTANDING OF MAN AND HIS WORLD, PREPARING HIMSELF FOR THE DAY WHEN
HE WILL BE CALLED ON TO PERFORM -- TO BE READY.. TO BE AT HIS BEST!
LECTURES
COMED
TR
PSYCHOLOGY
VIEW A. TRUE-FALSE ? PROOF!
VIEW B. ?
I THOUGHT THEY'D SEND ME AN IMPROVED SCRIPT BY NOW!? THIS WAITING CAN BECOME IRRITAITING!
I'M LIKE A PRIZE FIGHTER IN TRAINING BUT WITH NO FIGHT SCHEDULED!.. AT TIMES, IT ALL SEEMS LIKE A WASTE..SENSELESS..
..IS IT?..NO! WHATEVER HAPPENS..SOMEDAY.. I WILL ACT AGAIN! I'M PREPAIRING FOR THAT DAY!
RELAX! D. IS A PRISONER OF HIS OWN PASSION FOR ACTING! HIS BEING PRACTICAL AND WORKING WILL WIN OVER HEROIC IDEALS THAT MEAN UNEMPLOYMENT!.. AND ONCE HE RENOUNCES HIS PRINCIPLES, HE'LL NEVER AGAIN GIVE US ANY TROUBLE!
3.

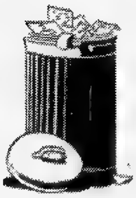

YOU GUYS WHO DON'T PAY GAMBLING DEBTS ARE A LOW FORM OF..PHEW.. THIS JOINT NEEDS AN AIRING!
..SPOT! I'LL HAVE THE MONEY IN A FEW DAYS.. HONEST..
LYING AGAIN! BOYS, HE NEEDS A LESSON! AAGHH!..WHY DON'T YOU CLEAN THIS FILTHY PLACE.. ITS UNHEALTHY!
NO, SPOT, PLEASE!
WATCH OUT! Koff koff DIRT! Koff YOU TRYING koff koff koff TO INFECT ME! Koff
..ANTISEPTIC PILLS.. HURRY!...GIMME A CLEAN SCARF...DIS-CENFECT THE FOUL AIR AROUND ME.. DIRT..
YOU FILTHY SLOB, MAKING ME COME TO THIS GERM HOLE FOR NOTHING! GIMME A CLEAN GLOVE!
IF I HAVE TO COME BACK TO THIS FILTH..I'LL BURN IT DOWN-WITH YOU IN IT! I WANT THAT 3 GRAND..
..TO MORROW AFTER-NOON!
AAAAAGHH! GET THESE DIRTY PAPERS OFF ME!
..GET OFF ALL THE DIRT SPRAY MY CLOTHES... HURRY!..I FEEL THAT FILTH SMOTHERING ME!
DIRT'S ALL GONE, SPOT!
MAKE SURE! ..DON'T MISS ANY SPOTS!
I'D DO ANYTHING TO GET OUT OF BEING EXPOSED TO DIRT AND FILTH!
PLAY IT SAFE.. SPRAY ALL OVER ME!
WHY DIDN'T YOU PARK CLOSER! KEEP SPRAYING UNTIL I'M IN-SIDE!
I'VE GOT TO GET TO BE A BIG BOSS.. HAVE A CLEAN PROTECTED IN-SIDE LIFE!
4.


NOTHING HAPPENED.. AN ACCIDENT.. SO DROP IT!..
ED'S IN SOME KIND OF TROUBLE AGAIN!..
D. COULDN'T AFFORD ANOTHER LOAN.. STILL OWE HIM FOR MY SHARE IN SETTING UP THIS BUSINESS! IF HE HAD ONLY GIVEN IN TO THE STUDIO..
ED'S VISITORS PLAYED ROUGH! .."TOMORROW AFTERNOON!"?! I'LL ALSO BE HERE! NOW I GOT TO GET TO THAT LECTURE!
BUT HE HAD TO BE PIG-HEADED!
..SOB.. IT IS NO USE.. WHY BOTHER.. LIFE IS EVIL.. SYSTEM IS ROTTEN.. WHY DOESN'T SOMEONE CARE.. LOVE ME.. NEVER HAD A CHANCE.. OTHERS TO BLAME.. SELFISH.. I TRIED.. CAN'T HELP BEING THE WAY I AM.. NO CHOICE.. WHY CAN'T I HAVE MY WAY.. SOB.. WHY ME.. SOB...
CUT! BEAUTIFUL! THAT'S TELLING LIFE THE WAY IT IS!
I FEEL HUMBLE MAKING SUCH A PROFOUND SOCIAL MOVIE!
THAT WAS TO BE D.'S ROLE! CURSE HIS ARROGANT SELFISHNESS! WITH HIS FAVORABLE REVIEWS AND OUR RELEVANT THEME, THIS FILM COULD OF BEEN A FINANCIAL, SOCIAL AND ARTISTIC SUCCESS!
BUT D.'S ATTITUDE IS ANTI-HUMANITARIAN! DUTY, SELF SACRIFICE TO OTHERS NEEDS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OBSESSION ABOUT SELFISH, PERSONAL CONCERN! TRUE HEROISM IS NOT INDIVIDUAL BUT SOCIALLY ORIENTED, A COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT!
STILL WE'VE GOT TO USE D.SKY'S SOON! LET'S OFFER HIM OUR BEST STORY-"THE GREY HERO"! IF HE REFUSES IT.. I'LL SEE HIM RUINED! HE'LL LEARN NO ONE MAN CAN OPPOSE OUR COMMON GOOD... AND GET AWAY WITH IT!
ALMOST WASN'T IN TIME!
PLEASE.. TELL SPOT A CHECK'S DUE.... TOMORROW! I SWEAR...
SPOT SAID YOU PAY NOW OR WE WRECK YOU AND THIS STINKING PLACE!
NO, PLEASE, ONE MOR-OOF!
..THOSE SUB-HUMANS! I CAN'T JUST RUSH IN THERE.. TO HELP ED, I NEED AN EDGE.. SOMETHING TO SHAKE THEM UP.. WAIT!.. YAH!..
..MY IDEA BETTER WORK.. A QUICK CHANGE..

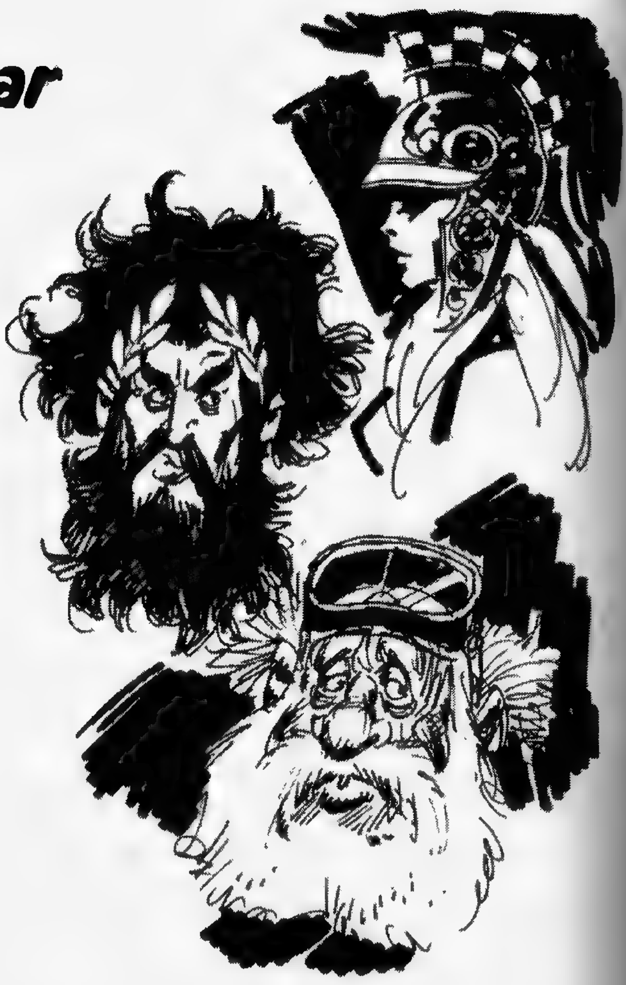

AAAARRGGH
.WHAT'S THAT?!
..IT..ITS FROM BACK HERE..-AAAHH!
I'LL GET WHOEVER OOOOOOOFFF..
SEE HOW WELL I PRACTISE YOUR "LANGUAGE OF FORCE", BROTHER BARBAIRIANS!
COME MENTAL DEGENERATES, LET US REASON TOGETHER!
GET THAT.. AAAHH!
HEY!..NO! .WAIT..
..GOT TO KEEP PRESSING..
..DON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE...
..TO RECOVER THEIR WITS..
..OR GET OFF THE DEFENSIVE!
JUST LEAVE THEM ONE OUT...
.TO GET OUT OF HERE!
6


..AND STAY OUT!
..TROUBLE'S OVER, ED, YOU CAN PAY THEM OFF TO-MORROW!
YOU FOOL! EVEN IF I CAN..NOW WE'RE BOTH IN WORSE TROUBLE!
THEY'LL BE BACK-WANTING YOU! I'LL BE FORCED TO EX-POSE YOU! THERE IS NO ESCAPE FOR EITHER ONE OF US!..STUPID HEROICS..
THEY WOULD-N'T!?... YES... THAT KIND WOULD!
SO WE TURN IT OVER TO THE LAW..
YOU CRAZY! NO POLICE! ..I'LL DENY EVERYTHING!.. YOU'RE ASKING TO GET US KILLED!
SPOT IS A NUT!.. WE'RE LIKE GERMS TO HIM!..CALL THE POLICE AND FOR SURE..SPOT WOULD KILL US!
SO WE JUST WAIT.. AND TAKE WHAT-EVER THAT SICK BUNCH WANTS TO DO TO US!
IF WE BREAK THEIR RACKET. WITHOUT THEM KNOWING WHO DID IT!
IT CAN'T BE DONE! I WANT NO PART OF IT!
"NO PART" YOU MADE SPOT AND HIS RACKET POSSIBLE BY DEALING WITH HIM..YOU FEED HIM... NOW YOU WANT TO PROTECT HIM..SO HE'S FREE TO HURT US! IF NO POLICE, THEN IT IS UP TO US! TELL ME ALL YOU KNOW ABOUT SPOT KLEANER!
..I..I didn't want it to come to THIS!..
..AND THAT'S ALL I KNOW!
ITS ENOUGH!.. NOW HOW TO GET SPOT TO GIVE UP HIS RECORDS? ..WHAT IF..
..YES!..ITS THE EDGE I NEED TO PUT SPOT "ON THE SPOT"..A VERY SPECIAL COSTUME!
DON'T MAKE IT WORSE D, GIVE IT UP!
STOP ASKING ME TO GIVE UP MY LIFE!
7


..BUT, BOSS...I...I WASN'T THERE..YA..SAYS' MY RE-SPONSIBILITY..BUT..BUT..
..AFRAID TO GET DIRTY, SPOT? MAYBE I SHOULD TRANSFER YOU BACK TO THE SLUM.. HANDLING DRUNKS! NO MORE EXCUSES...JUST DELIVER..OR ELSE!
ALRIGHT, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!..FOUL UP AND YOU'RE DEAD!..
..WINDING UP ALWAYS BEING EXPOSED-SUFFOCATING IN FILTH...NO!.. BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE, I'VE GOT TO PROTECT MY JOB FOR GOOD!
LET'S GO! I'LL DO THE WORK, YOU STAND BY.. A LOOKOUT!
PLEASE, D. DON'T... LOOK, MAYBE I CAN STILL TALK TO SPOT... OFFER HIM A BONUS.. I'M SURE HE'LL LISTEN TO REASON!
REASON IS WHAT MAKES MAN AT HIS BEST POSSIBLE! WAS REASON EVER A GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR SPOT! YOU READY TO GO TO THE POLICE?... NO!
YOU REFUSE TO ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR TROUBLE OR FOR CLEARING IT UP! SOMEHOW IT ALL HAPPEND-SOMEHOW IT WILL BE CLEARED UP! BUT A SOMEHOW ALWAYS MEANS..A SOMEBODY!
I..I can't help it..I can't...
I'M GOING TO TRY THIS... WITH OR WITHOUT YOU!
OKAY, YOU TWO...JUST HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
NEXT ISSUE
THE CONCLUSION!
8.



From the Circular File



WELL ANOTHER ISSUE OF COMIC CRUSADER COMES TO A CLOSE. I HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT! THE ILLUSTRATION IN THE UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER OF THIS PAGE IS BY SPANISH ARTIST, CARLOS GIMENEZ. YOU REGULAR READERS MIGHT REMEMBER HIS BIOGRAPHY FEATURED IN C.C. #12. I'M INDEBTED TO COMIC CRUSADER'S EUROPEAN "FOREIGN-FAN FARE" EDITOR, JOHN MANSFIELD, FOR OBTAINING IT FOR ME. ALSO THANKS TO BRUCE PATTERSON FOR HIS HUMOROUS CARTOON WITH THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE...WRITE! REMEMBER YOU CAN'T HAVE A LETTER COLUMN WITHOUT LETTERS!!! SPEAKING OF MAIL, LET'S DIP INTO THE CIRCULAR FILE AND SEE HOW YOU LIKED LAST ISSUE.

MARK LUCKE
211 East Cleveland Street
Beeville, Texas. 78102

I'm not much for colorful LOC's, as you might have surmised if you've seen some of the poorer letters I've had printed in various National comics. Then again, sometimes my critiques come off halfway decently. At any rate, I couldn't resist sending you a line or two of my opinion of Comic Crusader #13.
Steranko's cover, needless to say, was awe-inspiring. He certainly has a way with interpreting the female figure! I enjoyed the Defender strip, even though I hadn't seen its opening segments. I'm sure you know your work is as good as many a pro's, and, as a reader previously commented, your inkstyle is unique.
I can't say the story itself was all that original, but again, it easily measured up to much of today's professional work.
Tom Fagan's "05701" was okay; I'm not actually that fond of book reviews, but there Tom managed to pull it off in such a way that it did seem worth the time it took to read it.
The Staton interview was perhaps the most worthwhile presentation in the issue. I don't know much about Charlton's creative staff, so, naturally, I found the article interesting.
Finally, Steve Ditko's Mr. A strip proved indeed to be interesting and provoking. Kudos to Steve for this strip.
I did miss the presence of "Comic Chatter"...I'm kind of partial to newszines, and I hope this feature will return next issue.

I THANK YOU FOR THINKING MY WORK IS AS GOOD AS A PRO'S. IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO KNOW SOMEONE APPRECIATES WHAT YOU'RE DOING. AS FOR THE DEFENDER STORY NOT BEING ORIGINAL... THERE I HAVE TO DISAGREE!!! I MAY SWIPE ART ON OCCASION, BUT NOT STORY LINES. THAT CONCLUSION TO THE DEFENDER STORY WAS A LONG THOUGHT OUT PIECE OF WORK. IT TOOK QUITE A FEW ISSUES TO MAKE ALL THE PIECES FIT. THE WHOLE IDEA BEHIND COMIC CRUSADER IS THE REVIEW OF COMIC HEROES FROM THE PAST. TOM FAGAN IS TOPS AT THIS TYPE OF INFORMATIVE ARTICLE. I HOPE THAT HE WINS THE BEST FAN WRITER AWARD THIS YEAR, IN DON & MAGGIE THOMPSON'S "COMIC ART FAN AWARDS." HE CERTAINLY DESERVES IT! I HOPE YOU LIKED STEVE DITKO'S CONTRIBUTION TO THIS ISSUE, AS MUCH AS HIS MR. A SERIES. I PUT IN "COMIC CHATTER" WHENEVER I HAVE NEWS TO DIVULGE ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS IN C.C., OR BITS OF COMIC BOOK NOSTALGIA. IT'S SORT OF A SEMI-REGULAR FEATURE.

LAURINE WHITE
5408 Leader Avenue
Sacramento, Calif. 95841

Comic Crusader #13 certainly had beautiful covers; the solid black areas are so effective. Gil Kane's back cover is similar to his Warlock cover on a recent RBCC.
Between the covers, The Defender was better than anything else! The art on that strip was superb, magnificent, etc. I really like your artwork and the Wally Wood effect you give it.
Tom Fagan's article was overwritten. It is fine to wax glorious (or something) on heroes of the Golden Age, but Captain Atom in 1967? I just didn't understand what was happening there. He should have mentioned a few of the villains and battles from Lady Luck, "13", and especially The Black Cat. The paragraph on Trigger Burke was only a start on what the article needed to enliven it.
Joe Staton's picture was too cluttered. It should have been of Primus. After all, he was Primus' artist. Too much propagandizing in the Ditko story. And somewhere in a paragraph in issue #13, you should have put in some information about yourself. How is your child? Especially how are your eye operations progressing? Don't you think that we fans care? Please say something about these things in Comic Crusader #14!

TOM'S ARTICLE WAS FAR FROM BEING OVERWRITTEN! CAPT. ATOM WAS INCLUDED BECAUSE OF THE CHARACTER HE FOUGHT IN THE ISSUE REFERED TO..."13" AND FAUSTUS. THE ARTICLE WAS ON 13 OR LUCK ORIENTED CHARACTERS YOU KNOW. TOM ONLY TOUCHED ON EACH CHARACTER - GIVING THE FLAVOR OF EACH. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO GIVE THE WHOLE HISTORY OF EACH CHARACTER. IF TOM HAD DONE THAT, THEN THE ARTICLE WOULD HAVE BEEN OVERWRITTEN, AS IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN THE WHOLE ISSUE TO DO IT. HOWEVER, TOM HAS PROMISED TO DO A COMPLETE LADY LUCK ARTICLE, AT SOME FUTURE DATE. I, LIKE YOU, FOUND THAT PART OF TOM'S "13" ORIENTED ARTICLE EXTREMELY INTERESTING! ALL THE MR. A STORIES SHOW GOOD AND EVIL TO AN EXTREME, WITH EMPHASIS ON A MORAL POINT. IT JUST WOULDN'T BE MR. A WITHOUT THESE ELEMENTS. I DON'T OFTEN TALK ABOUT MYSELF IN C.C., BECAUSE IT'S A PUBLICATION ABOUT COMICS, NOT THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF MARTIN L. GREIM. IF SOMETHING REALLY GREAT HAPPENS TO ME, THEN I'LL SOMETIMES INCLUDE IT IN AN ISSUE. HOWEVER, SINCE YOU ASKED...MY DAUGHTER JOLENE IS FINE! SHE WILL BE 2 YEARS OLD IN APRIL AND JUST ENJOYED A FANTASTIC XMAS! MY EYES ARE SLIGHTLY WORSE. THE CONDITION CAN NOT BE CURED OR IMPROVED AND I'M TOLD WILL RESULT IN EVENTUAL BLINDNESS. HOWEVER, THAT MAY NOT HAPPEN FOR YEARS AND I TRY TO THINK IN THE POSITIVE ON THIS MATTER. I THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN!

JAMES BRANDON
Rt. #2
Rector, Ark. 72461

I was very surprised to open my mailbox and find C.C. #13 inside! You don't put out C.C. very often, but they are always welcome when you do.
You've had some weird covers for your last two issues.

I have never seen art of this style come from Steranko before. I must say it was very good!
The Defender finally returns! Since issue #8 I've wondered just what was going to happen. Your art wasn't quite as good in #13's saga as it was in #8's. So, the Defender and the Ruler know each other. Well, that figures. That shot of Surrette on the Time Probe platform was the best in the whole zine. I don't suppose there is anyway you can bring back the Defender. To my notion, he is the best character in fandom. Today, when the amateur superhero is on the way out, I welcome his return. I don't think you could replace him with another character.
I liked "05701" by Tom Fagan. The full page Bill Black illustration helped put it on its feet. The best character analysis (?) was Two-Face. I would liked to have seen more of Thirteen and Faustus, from the Capt. Atom story.
The Man Behind The First Man of the Sea was better than last issue's interview. I didn't know anything about Staton until I read this interview. His long answers were really quite informative.
Mr. A was very good. The first page was best. It really characterized our "great" country. After that first page however, I don't agree with Ditko on his philosophy. He seems to think that to be good you have to be perfect. I'm certainly not perfect, but I don't consider myself evil, which seems to be Ditko's way of thinking.
Gil Kane's back cover was received much better than last issues back cover. This is the first Kane art I've liked in two years.
Oh yeah, tell Ronn Foss I like his long underwear heroes. If he won't do any more Eclipse stories (*Note See C.C. #12) maybe you could talk him into letting you do the strip. Also, when will we see Fandom's Finest again?

YOU DON'T THINK I CAN BRING THE DEFENDER BACK, EH! WELL JAMES, YOU'RE WRONG! I LEFT AN ESCAPE CLAUSE IN THE STORY. HIS FATE DEPENDS ON TWO THINGS... FIRST - HOW MY SIGHT HOLDS UP. SECOND - MY OWN FEELINGS ON WHETHER I WANT TO DO A SEQUEL OR NOT. I WOULD NEVER ATTEMPT TO DRAW THE ECLIPSE. TO MY WAY OF THINKING, RONN FOSS IS THE ONLY ARTIST FOR THAT CHARACTER!

EVAN GEORGE
105 Upper Mtn. Ave.
Montclair, New Jersey, 07042

Having ordered and recieved Comic Crusader #12 and #13 I am completely delighted with both, but #12 especially. I was in Spain for 6 months and became a great fan of Carlos Gimenez and his Delta 99. I have collected the Delta 99 books from issue #1 to #27 (May 1971) Esteban Moroto's strip "5 for Infinity" ran through the first 20 issues and has just recently come out in Madrid in large Life Magazine size books in color (Spring '72). The title of the book is Dracula. The coloring is bad and it wipes out any nice lines Moroto had. Earlier Dracula issues, which featured Moroto's "Wolf" and artists such as Enric Sio and Jose Bea, are quite beautiful. Bright colors and drawn in Pop style. Moroto is very good here.
Spain is quite good for comics. A book called Trinca is especially well done. A strip called Manos Kelly is simply without peer in the realm of adventure-westerns. In terms of concept, art (the color is incredibly beautiful) action, suspense, violence, etc it is the most fullfilling and enjoyable strip I have ever read. The artist only signs as AHP. He is a maestro and deserving of the greatest renown.
By the way Gimenez's "Dani Futuro" also can be found in the Spanish "Tin-Tin". A truly fine work. Trinca, though, is the premier comic-zine and has the entire range of strips, from detective to adventure to sword and sorcery to Yellow Submarine type stories.
I thought you might be interested in this information.

NOT ONLY AM I INTERESTED IN YOUR INFORMATION, I'M SURE MANY OF MY READERS WILL BE TOO. BY NOW, IF YOU BUY THE WARREN PUB. MAGAZINES AT ALL, YOU MUST KNOW THAT WARREN IS REPRINTING ALL THOSE OLD DRACULA BOOKS (FEATURING WOLF) IN A $5.00 COLLECTION VOLUME. THE DRACULA BOOKS ARE ALSO BEING REPRINTED IN ENGLAND BY THE - NEW ENGLISH LIBRARY, BARNARD'S INN, HOLBORN, LONDON, E.C. 1, ENGLAND. THESE BOOKS ARE NOT IN A COLLECTION, LIKE WARREN'S, BUT ARE IN THEIR 24 PAGE ORIGINAL FORMAT...BEAUTIFUL COVERS AND ALL! YOU EVEN GET A FREE MOROTO POSTER WITH THE FIRST ISSUE. I'M COLLECTING THE WHOLE SET INSTEAD OF BUYING WARREN'S $5.00 VERSION. I'D LIKE TO SEE SOME OF GIMENEZ'S WORK PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES. HE'S TOPS, IN MY BOOK!

IT'S TIME TO CLOSE NOW, BUT BEFORE I GO I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU SOME INFORMATION ON SUBSCRIBING AND ART CONTRIBUTIONS. YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE, BUT FOR 2 ISSUES IN ADVANCE ONLY! WHEN YOUR SUBSCRIPTION RUNS OUT, YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED ON THE FLAP OF C.C.'S ENVELOPE. SUBSCRIPTION RATE IS $1.50 FOR 2 ISSUES!
ART AND WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME! KEEP IN MIND THAT THE WORK MUST BE AS GOOD, OR BETTER, THAN WHAT IS NOW APPEARING IN C.C. FOR WRITTEN WORK I PREFER RESEARCHED ARTICLES OR WELL DONE INTERVIEWS. I HAVE NO REAL USE FOR SHORT STORIES.
WELL, UNTIL NEXT TIME, STAY WELL! BEST - MLG

GET THE LEAD OUT...
WRITE!
BRUCE D. PATTERSON '72

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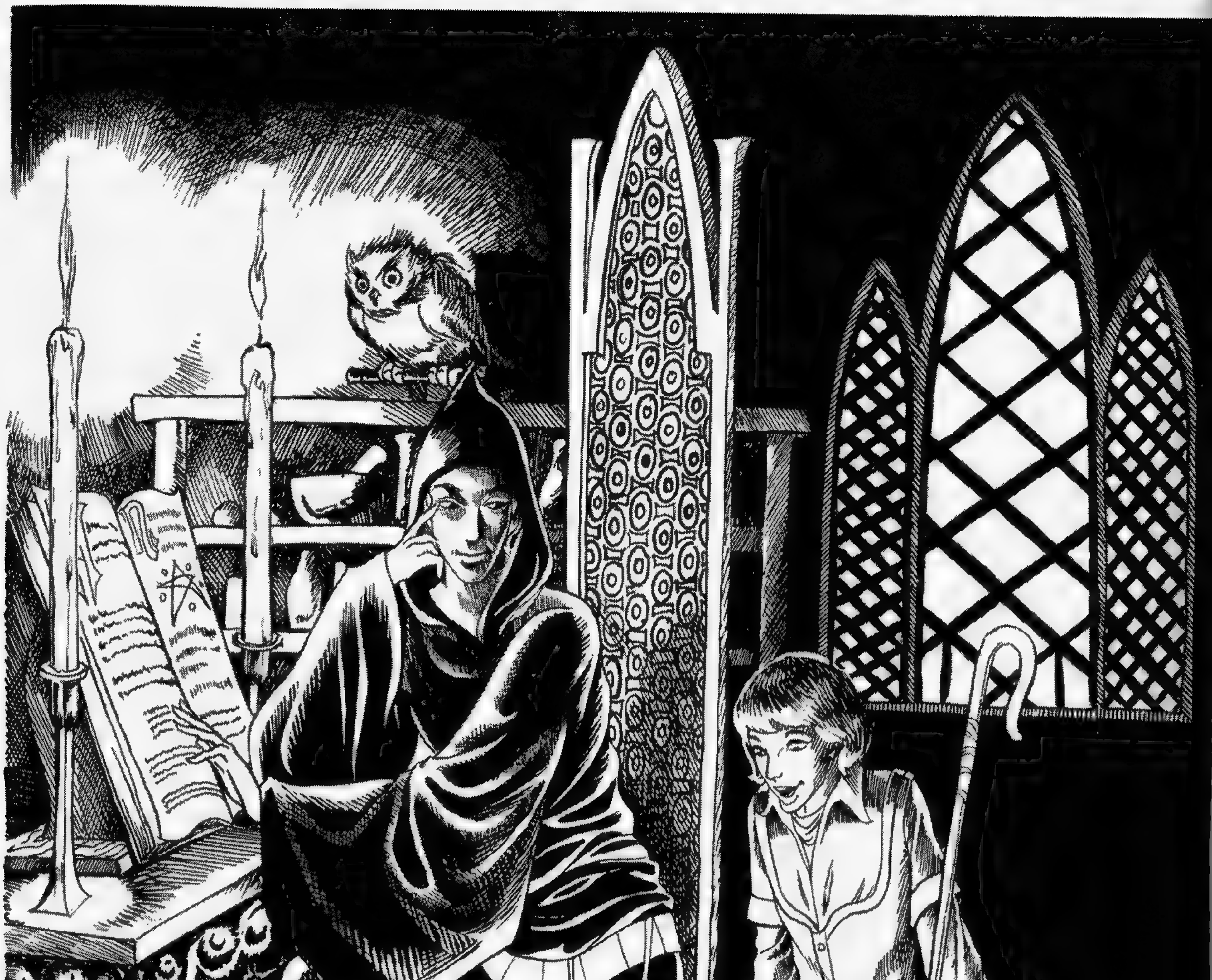
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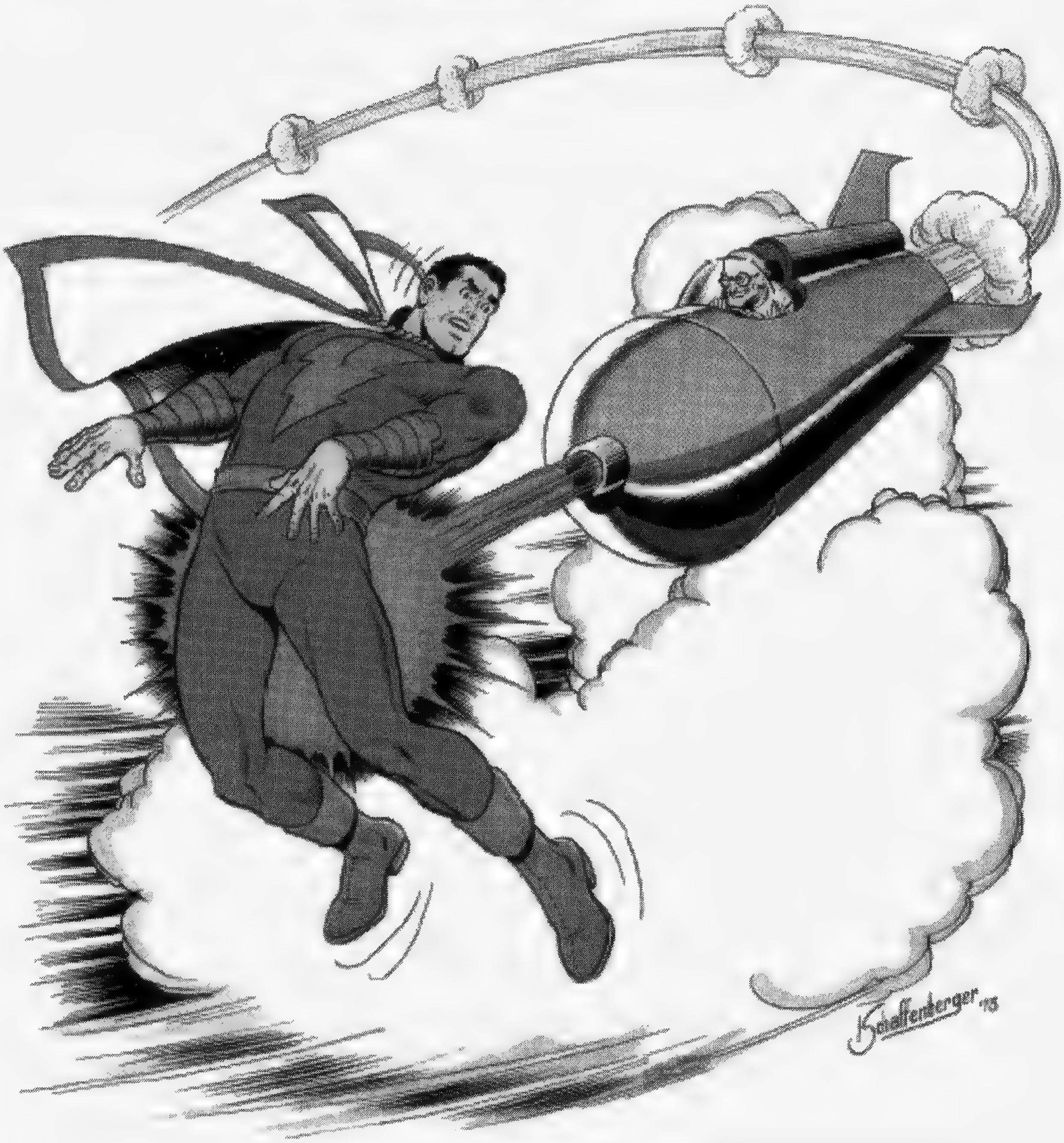
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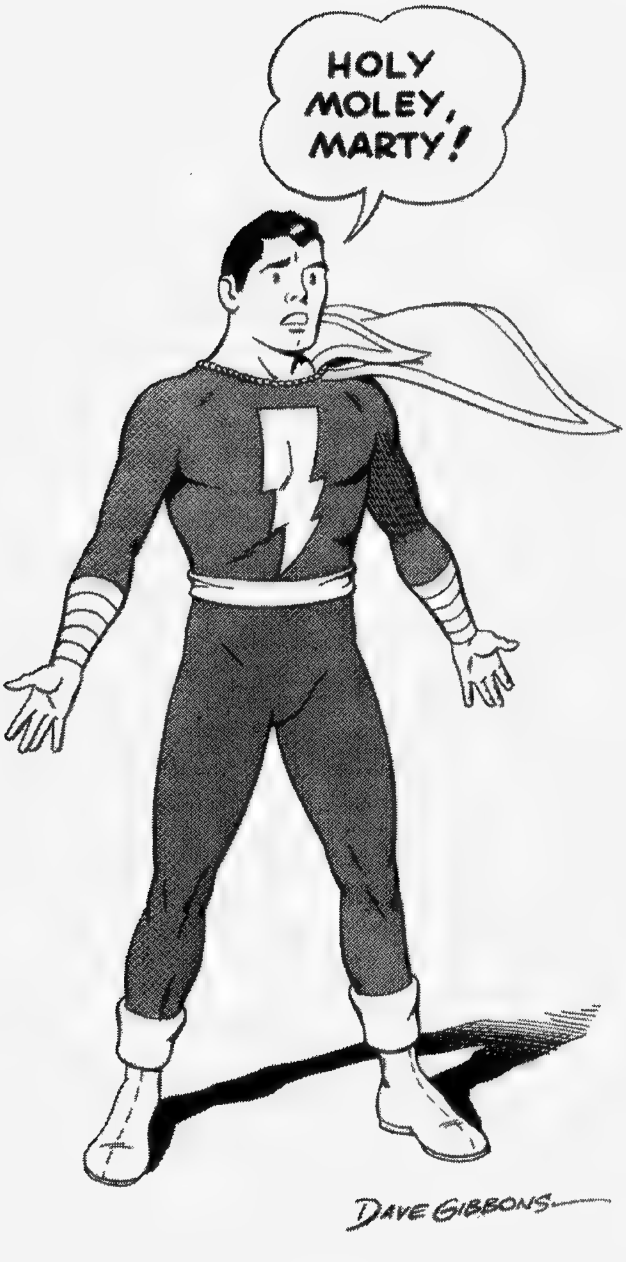
CRUSADER COMMENTS



Greetings friends and welcome to another issue of COMIC CRUSADER! In this issue, I begin, what I hope will be, a very interesting series..."Great Comic Book Clashes!" Throughout the history of this four color medium, there have been certain classic confrontations between heroes and villians. Almost every really memorable hero had an equally memorable foe. It will be the purpose of these articles to record the most noteworthy of these battles.

For this series' first installment, I decided to present one of the oldest "Comic Book Clashes"...The Battles Between Capt. Marvel and Dr. Sivana! Only one person could do justice to such an article and that person is Don Newton. Don's knowledge of Capt. Marvel is second to none. As a result, he and his talented friend John Clark, along with a helping hand from C.C. Beck, have provided a first rate report on this topic.

With a lead feature like Capt. Marvel vs. Sivana, it seemed only natural that I devote the larger portion of this issue to a Capt. Marvel theme. Bob Cosgrove's Binder interview and my interviews with Kurt Schaffenberger and Capt. Marvel Jr.'s new artist, Dave Cockrum, make up part of the other Marvel oriented features. It goes without saying, that I thank all these fine men for helping put this issue together.

Powerful and dramatic are the words that best describe Part 2 of Steve Ditko's "H-Series!" Ditko's mastery at story telling is at its peak, in this exciting climax to a story begun last issue. People have said, "Ditko Preaches!" Well, if telling a solid story with a moral is preaching, then I hope all of fandom hears the word!

Bill Everett was a friend of mine and I felt his passing deeply! In "Tale Of An Ancient Mariner" I've tried to create a small tribute to his career. I think you'll find it quite informative in the areas of his life and Water World characters.

Recently, another great of the comic book industry passed away. This man was Syd Shores! This issue's back cover was done by Syd, I believe, as a proposed cover for The Hulk Annual #1, but was replaced later by a Steranko piece. I'm pleased to present it to you now.

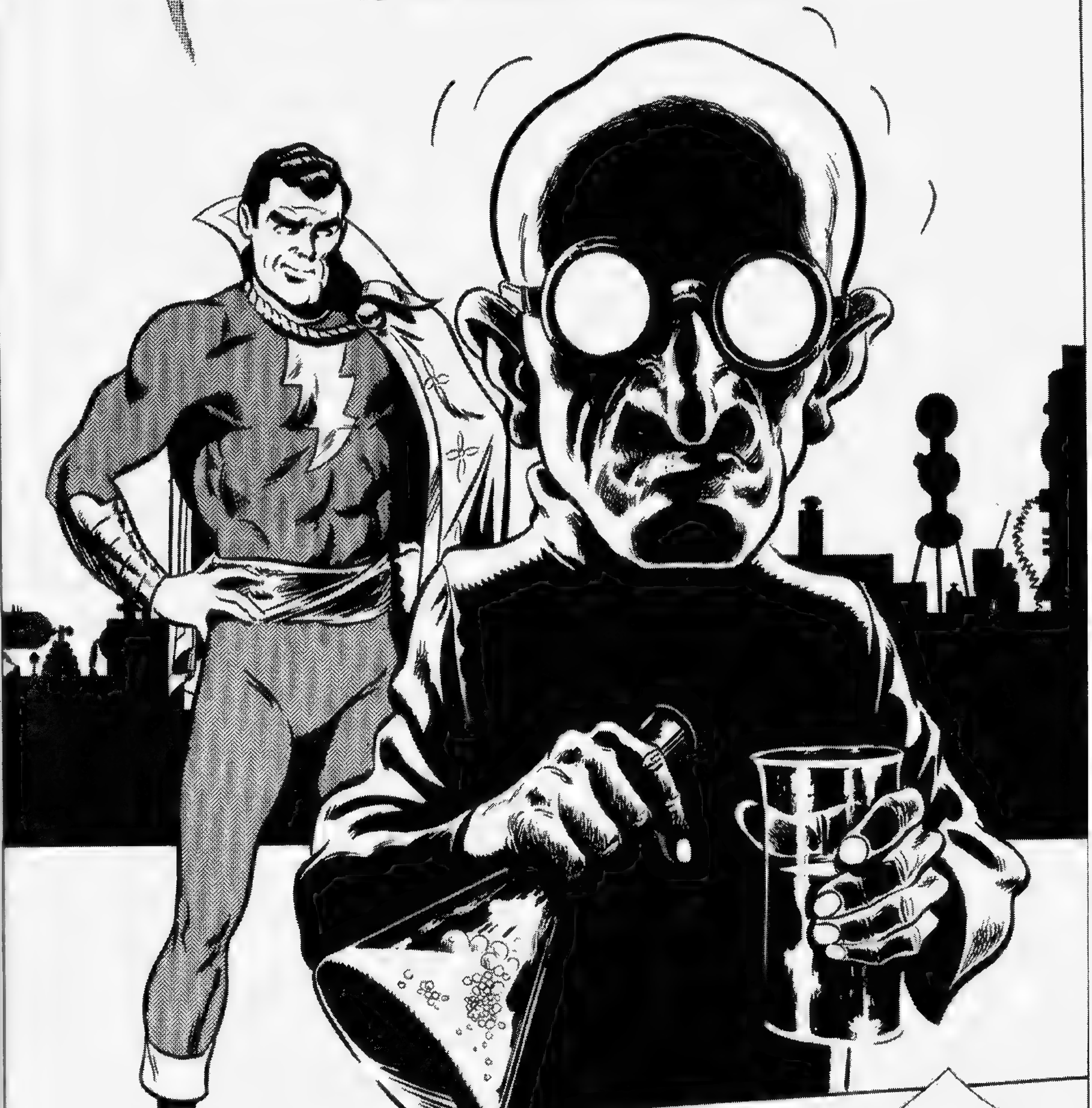
Due to the special printing needed on this issue's cover, this editorial is being typed well in advance of the completion of this issue's contents. Because of this, I'd like to thank anyone not mentioned above for contributing to this effort!

Also, a special thanks to English artist Dave Gibbons and friend Wayne Pond for their artistic contributions and to you readers for purchasing this issue!

Martin L. Greim

COME ON SIVANA, TIME TO RESUME OUR 13 YEAR WAR!

By DON NEWTON and JOHN CLARK

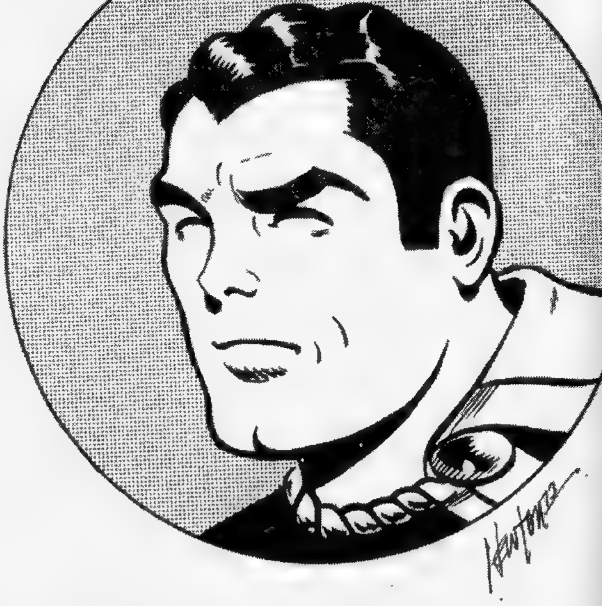


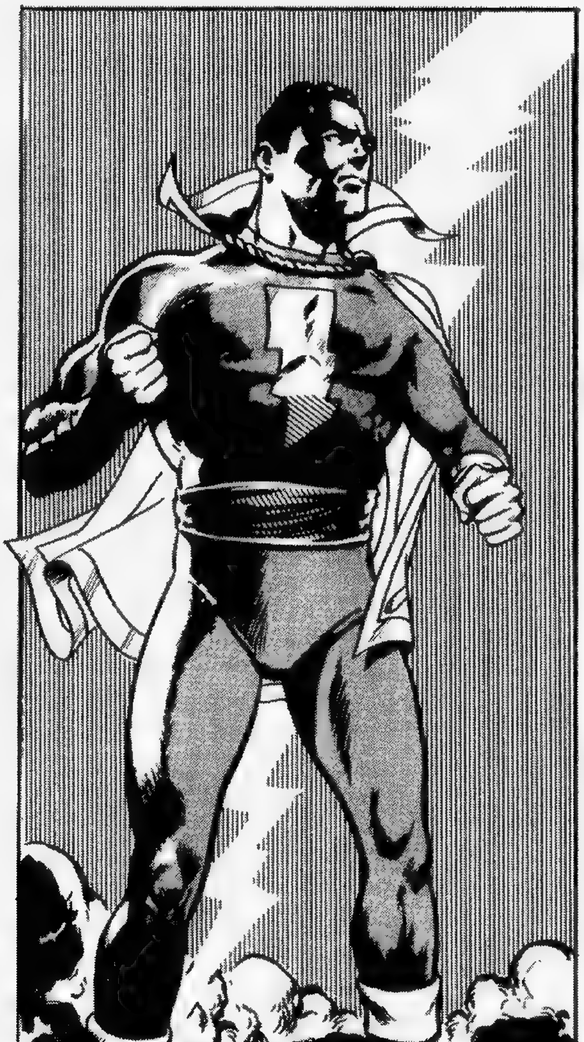
The "GOLDEN AGE OF COMICS" gave birth to the costume hero, and it was during this time that the "fad" reached its peak. Some heroes were as bad as the human mind can conceive...others attained a greatness still unsurpassed.

A great many in fandom have long been of the opinion that the truly great heroes were augmented, and perhaps even made great by their villains. A survey of such would tend to bear them out.

To be sure, Superman had Luthor; Capt. America had the Red Skull; Daredevil, the Claw; Batman, the Joker, Two Face, etc. Captain Marvel, however, is considered by many to have been the greatest single character of the Golden Age. As(seemingly) befits such an honor, Capt. Marvel fought an assortment of many great villains, including Mr. Mind, Mr. Atom, Ibac, and many others. However, if we are to single out Capt. Marvel's greatest villain, the choice would have to be his first: DR. THADDEUS BODOG SIVANA. (Pronounced Sivä/nä)

Sivana was designed to be the exact opposite of Capt. Marvel. Where the Capt. was a massive, 6' 2", 210 lbs., handsome, honest and always fair, Sivana was scrawney, barely cracking 5', ugly, mean and treacherous. But, Sivana was all of these in a humorous way. Therein lies the success of Sivana, Capt. Marvel, and most of the Marvel characters: they never played things seriously. It was all for laughs. Oh surp, Sivana wanted to declare himself ruler of the world and impose burdonsome taxes on the people, but he was lovable anyway. Sure, he talked about killing and torturing, but he never did. Sivana, originally intended to be cruel and villainous, became, instead, human and lovable.





THE CREATION OF SIVANA:

We were fortunate in procuring the aid of Mr. C.C. Beck in determining the actual creation of Dr. Sivana. He described it in this way!

"Back in the thirties I was busy making model airplanes with a friend who worked in a drug store. The druggest was a bald headed, big nosed old fellow, quite short in stature, and he always wore a white 'doctor's coat.' Does this give you a clue to Sivana's origin? While I created the 'World's Maddest Scientist's' physical appearance, Bill Parker (the gifted writer/editor who started many of Fawcett's characters off) created his mental attitude and name."

Sivana's name is an anagram of two Hindu words: "Siva," a Hindu God, "The Destroyer," and "Nirvana," the complete calm and control of one's being.

SIVANA'S CHILDREN:

Sivana's two original children were Beautia and Magnificus. In contrast to Sivana's ugliness, both were beautiful specimens of mankind. Both were also good and honest, but went along with their father's schemes because they felt sorrow for the old man (more about this later).

They were both very good characters, but, apparently, the publisher didn't like them and so they were sentenced to limbo.

Magnificus, the Adonis-like son, was forgotten almost immediately. His life, to my knowledge, was limited to one appearance in Whiz #15 (if I'm wrong, let me know).

Beautia, the better of the two characters, was Sivana's daughter, and, as her name implies, she was beautiful (if a bit flat). Because she was a romantic interest for Capt. Marvel, she was allowed to remain in the stories. But she was continually pushed further and further into the background, 'till she was more or less forgotten.

After the advent of Capt. Marvel Jr. and Mary Marvel, the big shots at Fawcett decided (for obvious reasons) to give Sivana two new offspring: Sivana, Jr. and Georgia, who both looked exactly like their father and were totally evil.

Mr. Beck spoke of them thusly:

"At the publishers order, those two bastard children were created, by what writer and artist I really don't remember. They were inhuman monsters, stiff and mechanical in appearance and character, almost like robots. They appeared mostly in stories written, drawn and edited by Fawcett men with whom I had no contact."

In the recent revival of Capt. Marvel, in D.C.'s "Shazam," Beck was called upon to draw Jr. and Georgia:

"I had a lot of fun making them human, funny characters, which they all should have been in the first place. But this is the sort of approach Fawcett always fought against, as they seemed to believe that all comic books should be filled only with monsterous, mindless, incredibly grim (and dull) characters. Wendell Crowley, Otto Binder, Bill Woolfolk, Rod Reed, and others agreed with me that comic books should be 'comic' whenever possible, and the books we handled were. They sold so well that the publisher could only mutter to himself as he counted the money coming in."

CAPT. MARVEL vs. SIVANA...Their First Encounter and Its Retellings:

Capt. Marvel first encountered Dr. Sivana in the first issue of Whiz Comics. At this time, Capt. Marvel's alter ego, Billy Batson, was still a newsboy, selling on a street corner. The headline in the papers he is selling reads: "Maniac Scientist Threatens U.S. Radio System!" The "Maniac Scientist" is, of course, Sivana, who has a ray that will destroy all radio broadcasting. He threatens to do so unless a ransom of 50 million dollars is paid.

The next day, as Billy is hawking his newspapers, he hears two of Sivana's henchmen discussing the plan. He follows them to the mad doctor's hideout. One of Billy's customers is Sterling Morris, owner of radio station W.H.I.Z. Billy naturally figures that Moris will be interested in Sivana's whereabouts, and rushes to tell him what he's learned. Morris disregards the boy, however, incredulous that Billy could have discovered the hideout where all the police had failed. "Ridiculous! If it turned out as you say, why I'd... Ha Ha!...Yes, if you're right Billy, I'll give you a job as a radio announcer!" Billy changes to Capt. Marvel and stops Sivana's scheme, wrecking his machine, although the scientist himself escapes. Morris, being as good as his word, gives Billy the job he would hold for the remainder of the Marvel series, without even so much as an F.C.C. exam.

With the publication of Capt. Marvel Adventures #80, Fawcett decided it was a good time to retell Cap's origin.

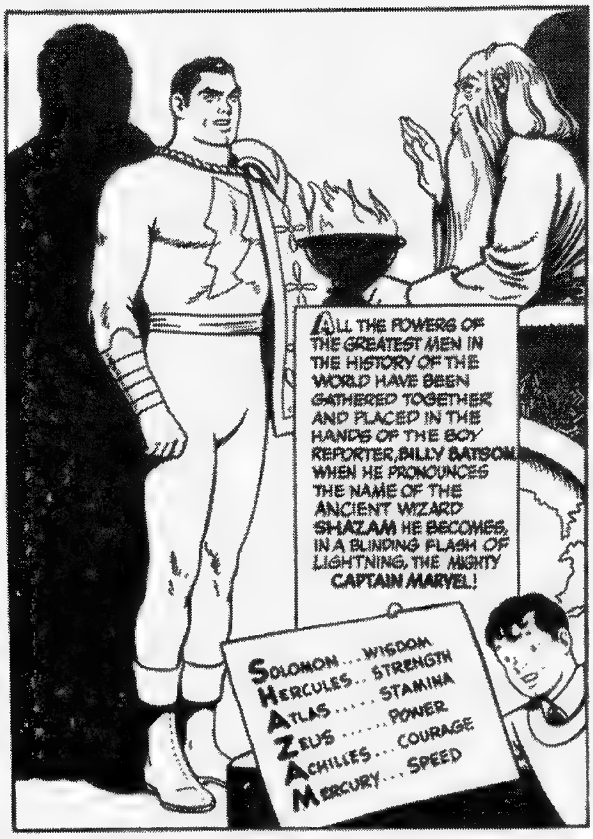
The year is 1948 and Sivana is in his laboratory lamenting his many failures at conquering the universe: "I'm the world's greatest genius! But what good is that against the World's Mightiest Mortal? I wish Capt. Marvel had never lived!"

Sivana reasons that if Billy Batson had been killed before he met Shazam, then Capt. Marvel would never exist. "I'll work out a chemical solution that will enable me to visit the past! Heh heh heh!" As Sivana goes into the past, however, his memory of future events is wiped out. He is not aware of Billy or Capt. Marvel, and so history repeats itself.

In Capt. Marvel Adventures #121, Sivana again visits the past in order to destroy Billy. This time he uses a time machine, and, strangely enough, he doesn't lose his memory. I guess those time machines have it all over chemical solutions. In the past, Sivana arranges to be "held up" by a thug. Capt. Marvel, having never met Sivana rescues the old man and they become fast friends. Sivana convinces Capt. Marvel that he is a benevolent scientist, and Cap aids him in creating what he believes to be a ray that will wipe out all disease germs on earth. Actually, it is a death ray! Sivana asks Cap to change to Billy to test the ray. It doesn't work, so Sivana has the Capt. correct the malfunction (it needed more power in the "Z" phase). Capt. Marvel is about to change back to Billy when he realizes that Sivana (since they'd just met) could not possibly know his alter ego. Under threat of violence, Sivana reveals his plot, whereupon Capt. Marvel smashes the machine...with Sivana!! (Capt. Marvel was always pretty mean to Sivana...). As a result of this beating, Sivana develops partial amnesia, remembering nothing of his plot. Capt. Marvel places him back in his time machine and sends him back to 1951. Capt. Marvel is waiting for the machine to appear because he remembers sending it off. So Sivana is put in jail, still wondering how to dispose of the "Big Red Cheese."

THEIR EARLY ENCOUNTERS:

In the early days of Whiz Comics, Capt. Marvel had more than his share of tussles with our favorite mad scientist. Some were of the best quality Fawcett put out.


ALL THE POWERS OF THE GREATEST MEN IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD HAVE BEEN GATHERED TOGETHER AND PLACED IN THE HANDS OF THE BOY REPORTER, BILLY BATSON. WHEN HE PRONOUNCES THE NAME OF THE ANCIENT WIZARD SHAZAM HE BECOMES, IN A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHTNING, THE MIGHTY CAPTAIN MARVEL!
SOLOMON... WISDOM
HERCULES... STRENGTH
ATLAS..... STAMINA
ZEUS....... POWER
ACHILLES.... COURAGE
MERCURY.... SPEED

In Whiz #3, the story opens with Billy receiving a "mysterious news tip!" "Professor Xerxes Smith is planning a rocket flight to the planet Venus. Wonderful news story. Suggest you see him. He lives in Belair. A Friend." Billy locates Professor Smith, really Dr. Sivana, disguised with a bushy black beard and begins to interview him. Billy "convinces" the professor to fly him to Venus. When they arrive, they are attacked by Venusian monsters. Billy becomes Capt. Marvel and defeats them. Sivana is astounded! "But, you were a boy a minute ago..." He has learned Billy's secret. As they talk, they are attacked by "Glompers," the frog-like inhabitants of Venus and are overpowered (Capt. Marvel wasn't really that swift in those days). The Glompers take them to their palace, where they meet the queen of Venus: "I, Beautia, bid you welcome." Beautia has Professor Smith released and he reveals himself as Dr. Sivana. Capt. Marvel is "securely fastened by 50 ton weights and supersteel cables." With Cap. helpless, Sivana explains his plan. He and Beautia plot to conquer the Earth (this is for the first time!). "With her beauty and my brains, Queen Beautia and I will rule the Earth!"

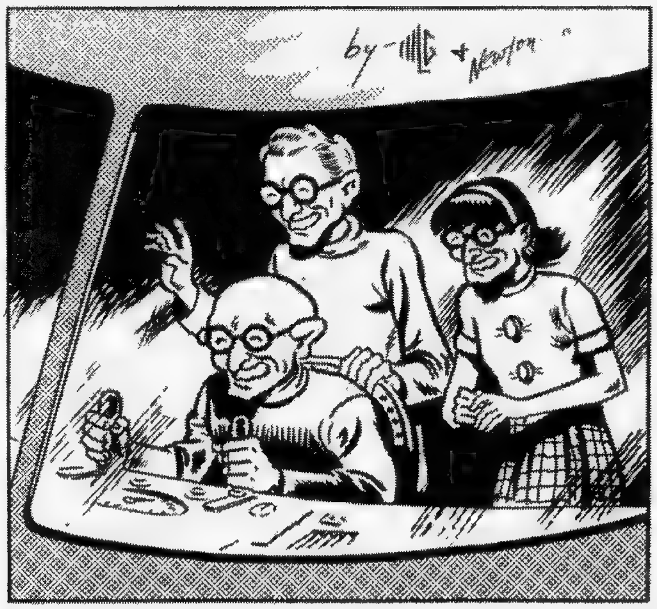
Beautia offers Cap his life, if he will marry her. He refuses and is sentenced to death. A Venusian monster is turned loose as Sivana and company rocket toward Earth. With them gone, Capt. Marvel breaks free and vanquishes the monster and all the Venusians (we knew he could do it, all along!). Using the wisdom of Soloman, he designs a rocket and speeds to Earth. On Earth, Sivana has already perfected a gas that will make all men his slaves. Capt. Marvel arrives in the nick of time, though, and proceeds to demolish everything. Sivana's henchmen intervene, and in the ensuing battle, Sivana and Beautia escape. But, Capt. Marvel is left a note: "In spite of everything, I think you're marvelous. You and I will meet again. Au Revouir, 'Beautia." Capt. Marvel blushes.

The story in Whiz #14 picks up where the previous one had left off, with Sivana in jail. The guards are puzzled. Although Sivana faces serious charges in court, he seems calm, making endless calculations. He keeps calling for more paper. Two weeks later, he is brought before the judge. "Thaddeus Bodog Sivana: It is the order of this court that in punishment for your innumerable crimes, you be sentenced to serve 77 consecutive prison terms, totalling 9000 years at hard labor! Have you anything to say?" "Only this... You've got to catch me first! Heh! Heh!" Sivana walks through the wall of the court! Though he is searched for, he has vanished without a trace. Days go by, and then a succession of mysterious crimes begin. First, the Federal Building in Washington is blown up; Fort Knox is robbed of 420 million dollars; and then, the President of the United States is kidnaped! Billy is sent to Washington to get the story. The guards there insist that it was a ghost who kidnaped the President. One of the guards describes the ghost as a "bald headed old man." Of course, we knew it was Sivana all the time, but Billy has just realized it. He's about to divulge this information to his listeners, when he too is kidnaped. Billy is knocked out, and when he awakens, he finds himself in a prison cell at Sivana's hideout, "deep within the solid rock of a huge mountain." There are neithe doors or windows in the cell. Billy decides it would be useless to run around the cell, so, finding himsel free to speak, he says the magic word "Shazam" and becomes Capt. Marvel. Half an hour later, Cap is still in the cell. "I can't understand it! I've hit that wall with everything I've got and it's still as solid as ever!" Capt. Marvel resolves that he can't escape by force. "I guess I'll have to try something else, this time. Let's see...Hmm, yes, that might be it. Now if I just..."

Meanwhile, Sivana is with Beautia in another section of his underground hideout. He is confronting a grou of men he has kidnaped. "There's no use trying to escape," he says, "Because there isn't a single door or window in this whole place. And the only man who could help you is now helpless himself. Hee! Hee! Hee!" "That's what you think, my friend." Capt. Marvel steps through the wall! Sivana is stunned. He dashes through the opposing wall. Capt. Marvel follows. As Capt. Marvel pursues Sivana (literally!) through the mountain, the prisoners locate a radio and send for help. As the militia arrive, Capt. Marvel corners Sivana, who, by this time, is growing fainter. He is transparent as Cap lunges for him. The force of Capt. Marvel's lunge carries him through the mountain, but Sivana is gone! The military searc but there is no trace of him. "I guess he's gone fo good this time." Beautia bursts into tears.

Later, at radio station W.H.I.Z., Billy gives his account of the adventure: "Well folks, Sivana's secre was really a cinch for Capt. Marvel's super wisdom t figure out. By calculating the orbits and timing of each electron and each atom in a solid wall, he coul time his own atoms to pass between those of the wall like smoke through a screen. Each time however, a slight amount of his own substance got left behind,

SHAZAM!
BOOM!
By
& Newton



Sivana, Sivana Jr., and Georgia

causing the ghost-like after image, and finally, he used himself all up and there was nothing left after that last fatal wall."

Feel sorry for old Sivana? Well don't be, 'cause he was back in the next issue, #15.

In #15, Sivana turns up disguised as an oriental gang leader, "Dr. Footu Yu." There is never an explanation offered as to how he survived the previous adventure (says Billy, at the end of this story: "That's one thing we'll never know). Having tricked Billy into his hideout, Sivana fastens a device to him that prevents him from saying Shazam. "This little device, my young friend, is an ultra-frequency oscillator which is so delicately tuned that as soon as your magic word is pronounced, it immediately cancels it out by interferance. Watch:" Sivana attempts to say Shazam. It is drowned out by "Ozzle Ozzle," from the machine. Having Billy thus helpless, Sivana flys him to his hidden laboratory in the Central American Jungle (yes, he has one there, too!). Sivana indicates a large, dome-like structure. "That, Billy boy, is one of my incubators. I have a dozen of them here." In them, Sivana has reproduced the environment of Venus and is raising Glompers (remember them?). Beautia and Billy are put to work feeding the young Glompers. Beautia warns Billy: "They're all killers at heart. I hate to think of what they'll do when Sivana turns them lose on the world." Although unable to call upon Capt. Marvel, Billy waits for his chance and is finally able to make a break for freedom. He reaches Sivana's plane and (obviously having had flying lessons) takes off. Sivana discovers that Billy's escaped and pursues him in his rocket ship. After an hour long chase, Billy is forced to crash land in the mountains. Billy is lying nearly unconscious, but the crash has damaged the device on his neck. He feebly mutters: "Sh..Shazam." A vengeful Capt. Marvel appears. The rocket ship rams him, but Capt. Marvel doesn't budge. The ship lands and from it emerge Sivana, Beautia, a host of adult Glompers and a giant, Atlas-like young man. "After him, Magnificus!" shouts Sivana. Magnificus hits Capt. Marvel, knocking him over. Capt. Marvel returns the blow. The ensuing battle knocks half the mountain apart. As Capt. Marvel subdues Magnificus, Sivana is struck by a falling boulder and is severely injured. Capt. Marvel loads Sivana, Beautia, Magnificus and the Glompers into the rocket ship and flys them back to Venus. On the way, he asks Beautia to explain who Sivana is and why she and Magnificus (her brother) follow him. She does: "Back during the early part of the century, Sivana was one of the most brilliant and promising young scientists in Europe. Bursting with ideas to improve the lot of mankind and help all the world, Sivana was driven from country to country by men who called his dreams impractical and his science a fake. Finally, penniless and outcast, the broken scientist took his tiny son and daughter and set out in a rocket ship the world had laughed at as another crazy invention. Landing on the planet Venus, the lonely man battled almost overwhelming dangers for long years until his children were grown and the fierce jungles tamed. And so you see him today. Old, his once-magnificent mind warped with dreadful schemes for revenge on a world that would have none of him. Do you wonder?" Capt. Marvel is touched. "Sad!" is his only reply.

It is interesting to note that, in the prelude to the adventure in this issue, we get an interesting insight to Billy Batson/Capt. Marvel. Billy is at home, bored, nothing to do. "Ho-Hum! Eight O'Clock! Wish I had something exciting to do," he says. "Say, I wonder what Beautia is doing tonight?" Billy becomes Capt. Marvel, who doffs his uniform in favor of a dress suit (complete with tuxedo and carnation), and proceeds to sweep Beautia off her feet. "Good evening, Beautia, I thought you might like to step out a bit this evening!" Capt. Marvel was, perhaps, the only comic book super hero who was a swinger!

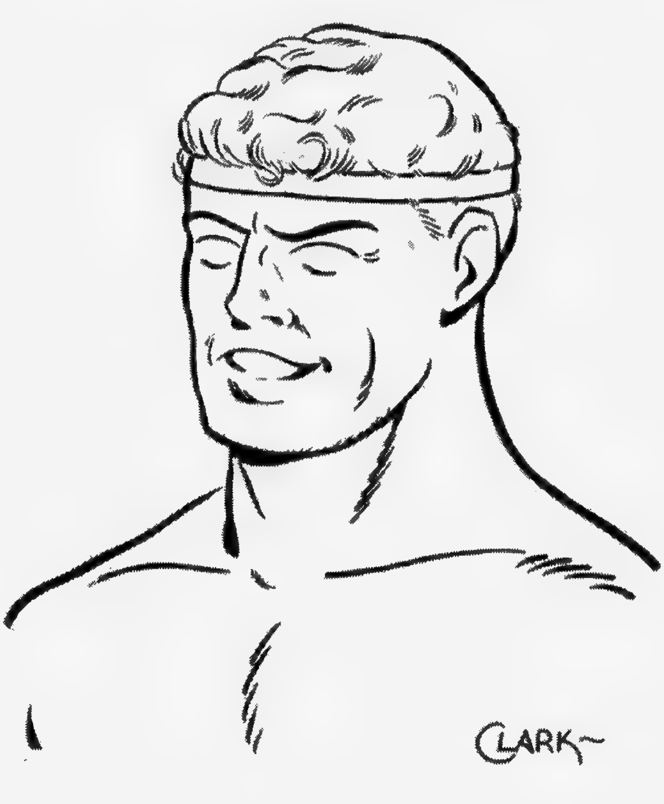
EPIC BATTLES:

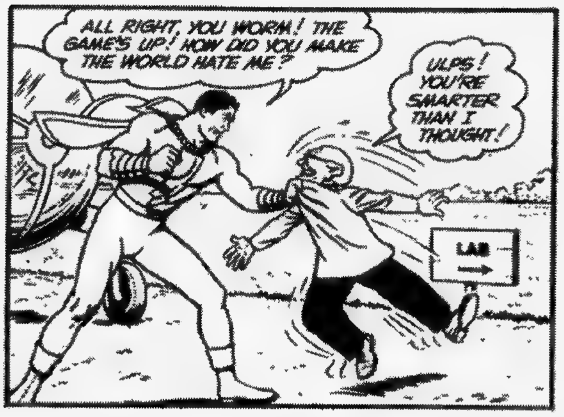
With the advent of Capt. Marvel Adventures #58, someone must have decided that Capt. Marvel would do well with book-length adventures. Many more were done, during the remaining life of the book, and, to my knowledge, every one of them featured Sivana. Most of the stories were uninspired, using the same plot of Sivana travelling through time, trying to foul up history. A few, however, were quite interesting.

In #58, the story concerns Sivana conquering the Earth with peace.

Part One, "Sivana Strikes Again!!" tells of how Sivana invents his "glad hand." He explains to his assistant, Beautia: "See? This gadget generates an electrodynamic force which will make people peaceful when I shake hands with them!" The device fits in the palm of his hand and works like a joy buzzer. The glad hand gets its first test when Sivana is accosted by a gangster, "Butcher Bane:" "I want my pay, ya little rat! Last week ya hired me for a job and didn't pay off." Sivana, determined to neither pay the crook, nor get killed, promises to pay Bane double, and asks him to shake on it. They do, and Bane immediately becomes peaceful and condescending. He refuses Sivana's money and leaves, a new man. Wandering through the streets, he preaches peace and love. Finally, he attempts to kiss a baby, but, because of his rough looks, the child's mother suspects the worst and screams for help. Billy Batson, passing nearby, hears her screams and becomes Capt. Marvel, to investigate. Bane, after being manhandled, manages to explain his change of heart to Capt. Marvel and how he only intended to kiss the baby. "Holy Moley! A reformed crook! But how did this happen?" "Sivana did it!" Sivana, who has been following the criminal to study his behavior, appears. "Yes Capt. Marvel!

MAGNIFICUS




ALL RIGHT, YOU WORM! THE GAME'S UP! HOW DID YOU MAKE THE WORLD HATE ME?
ULPS! YOU'RE SMARTER THAN I THOUGHT!
LAB →

You see, I'm doing good now, not evil! Let's shake on it!" Capt. Marvel hesitates: "No! I won't shake! I don't trust you, Sivana."

Later, Sivana throws a party, inviting all the gang leaders in the city to attend. As each enters, Sivana shakes hands with them and they all become peaceful. Having them thus subdued, he has them all sign their gangs and money over to him. Meanwhile, Billy runs into Beautia in an ice cream parlor. She inadvertantly mentions her father's party to him. Billy changes to Capt. Marvel and crashes the party. The gang leaders, of course, will not fight, since they're now peaceful, so Sivana is cornered. The scientist buys time by throwing a bowl of soup in Cap's face. While Capt. Marvel is confused, Sivana escapes. Capt. Marvel pursues him, but Sivana ducks around a corner and hides in an old ash can. Cap runs past, which brings us to part two, "Sivana's Viewpoint!"

Capt. Marvel, having lost Sivana, deduces that the mad scientist must have retreated to his laboratory. Arriving there, Capt. Marvel decides not to break in, for fear the noise will warn Sivana in time for him to escape again. As an alternative, he decides to change to Billy and crawl through an opening in a window (Capt. Marvel isn't too bright). Sivana is waiting and knocks Billy out with a wrench. As Billy comes to, Sivana clasps his hand, changing him. "Sivana, my friend!" Billy exclaims. "Billy old pal! Listen, Billy, I'm building a machine up on Venus that will shoot its peace ray over the whole world! Come along and see it!" Billy obediently agrees and is soon on Venus. Having seen the machine, Billy makes a broadcast to Earth, telling how wonderful it will be when Sivana establishes lasting peace on Earth. Hearing this, Sivana devises a new scheme for further entrapping Billy: "Billy! The Venusians want you to broadcast the same wonderful message to all of Venus!" "What? But I don't know the Venusian language!" "Oh, that's alright, I can fix that in an instant. Just step into my language lung, Billy. It will teach you the entire Venusian language in ten minutes!" Billy enters the machine and emerges, ten minutes later, speaking fluent Venusian. He gives the broadcast to the Venusians and as he does, as Sivana had anticipated, the effects of the glad hand wear off. Billy, once again mistrustful of Sivana, tries to become Capt. Marvel, but discovers an interesting side effect of the language lung...while it taught him to speak Venusian, it caused him to forget the English language completely. "Shazam" comes out "Shazoogle" in Venusian. Billy can't change.

Sivana, with Capt. Marvel out of the way, turns on his peace ray and rockets back toward Earth. In the meantime, Billy, terribly confused, wanders out of the laboratory and into the Venusian wilderness. Beautia, feeling sorry for him, follows.

At the beginning of part three, "Sivana Rules Earth," we find Sivana landing on Earth to find his ray already taking affect. Everyone has become meek and supplicating. He decides to make a test. He kicks the first person he sees. "Make way, scum! Make way for King Sivana!" "Yes sir! Sorry sir! You're the king, sir! If you say so sir!" Within 24 hours, Sivana has become King of Earth.

Back on Venus, Billy and Beautia, still wandering on the Venusian desert, are suddenly attacked by a Venusian monster. Billy tries to become Capt. Marvel, but once again, all he can manage is "Shazoogle." In desperation, Beautia gives him the correct pronounciation. Magic lightning, and Capt. Marvel appears to vanquish the beast. Beautia runs to him. "Oh, Capt. Marvel, that was magnificent...What? Don't you understand a word of English either?" "Ozzle? Ook De Gook??" Obviously he can't! Beautia takes Cap back to the lab and puts him into the language lung (Sivana told her not to cure Billy. He didn't say anything about Capt. Marvel!). He emerges, ten minutes later, speaking English. Tuning in on a radio broadcast from Earth, he discovers that Sivana has become King.

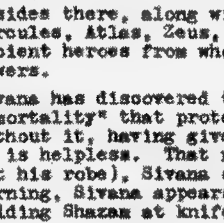
After smashing the peace machine, he sets out for Earth (Capt. Marvel no longer needs a space ship to fly through space). Meanwhile, back on Earth, Sivana is enjoying himself: "Make it a law that all gold and jewels belong to King Sivana! Make it a law that murder, crime and torture are legal! Make it a law that all policemen be thrown off cliffs!" "Yes, O' King!" "Heh Heh Heh! At last I am the rightful ruler of the universe! I'll do what I please now... and I'll think of the worst things possible! Heh Heh! I think tomorrow I'll order all people with bushy eyebrows to be tortured, just for fun! Heh Heh Heh! And the beauty of it all is that Capt. Marvel can't stop me! Billy Batson is up on Venus right now, unable to speak a word of English! Oh, Heh Heh Heh!" But then! "Guess again!" "G-G-Gulp! Capt. Marvel!" "Your reign of terror is over!" The effects of the smashed peace ray have worn off the people. Angrily, they mob Sivana. Capt. Marvel rescues him from the mob. "Back folks! Mob rule is just as bad as Sivana's rule! He'll go to jail for his deeds!" Sivana had ruled Earth for 37 hours 15 minutes. As a bystander aptly put it: "If he had ruled a week, all civilization would have been ruined!"

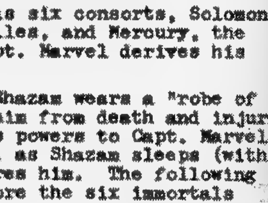
In Capt. Marvel #144, another feature length story of note appeared: "The Amazing Story Of The Stolen Shazam Powers."

As the introduction to this adventure, Sivana vows: "World's Mightiest Mortal, eh? Watch me turn him into the World's Biggest Weakling!" To make good his vow, Sivana, in his space ship, journeys to the Rock of Eternity in an attempt to kidnap Shazam.

For those not in the know, the Rock of Eternity is located in the very center of our universe. From it, a traveller can journey to any location in time or space. Old Shazam (billed as "Guardian of the Cosmos") resides there, along with his six consorts, Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles, and Mercury, the ancient heroes from whom Capt. Marvel derives his powers.

Sivana has discovered that Shazam wears a "robe of immortality" that protects him from death and injury. Without it, having given his powers to Capt. Marvel, he is helpless. That night, as Shazam sleeps (without his robe), Sivana captures him. The following morning, Sivana appears before the six immortals holding Shazam at knife point. "You're all going to obey me, or this knife does its work! Understand?"





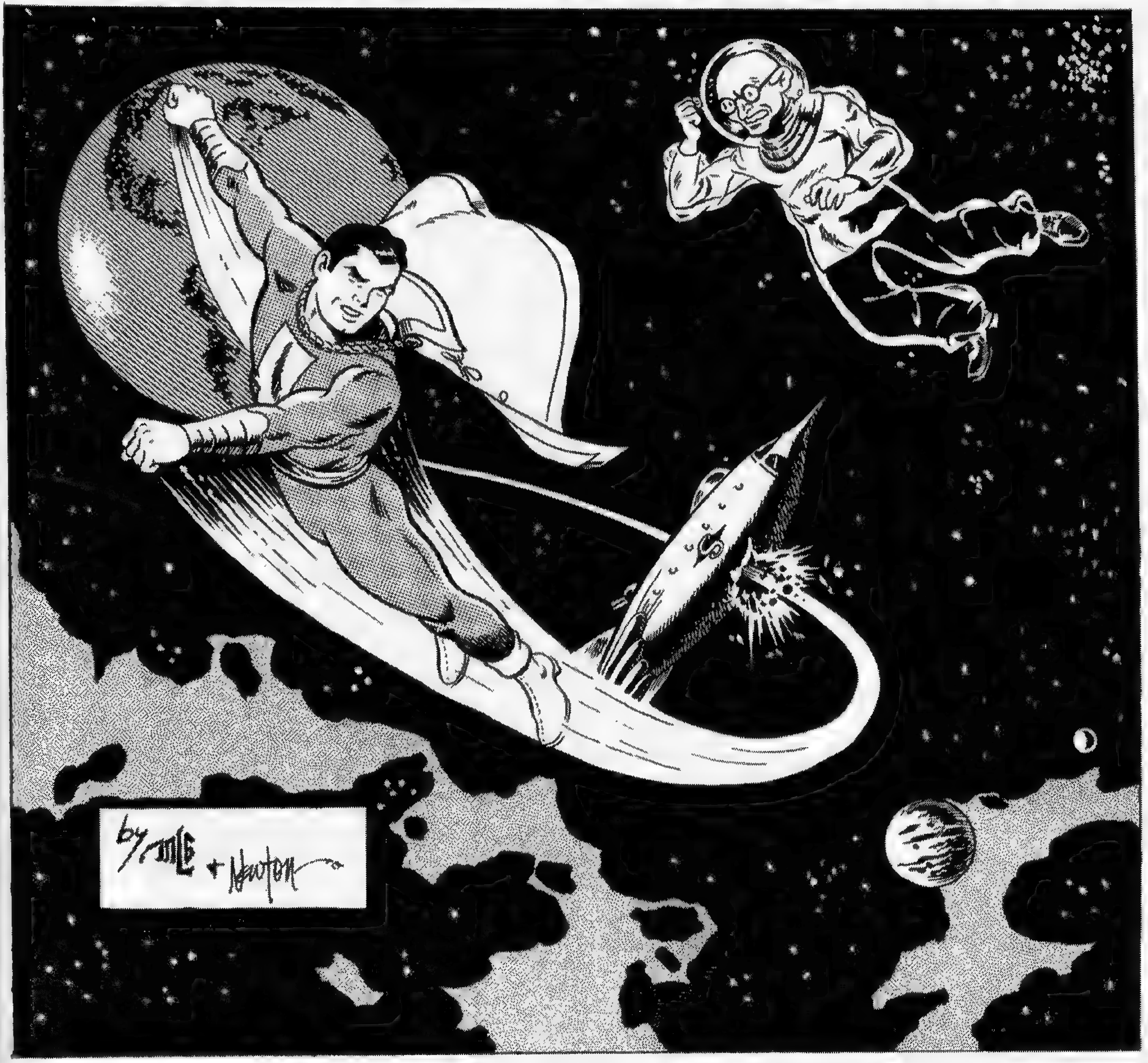
MAGIC LIGHTNING BRINGS BACK CAPTAIN MARVEL!
BOOM!

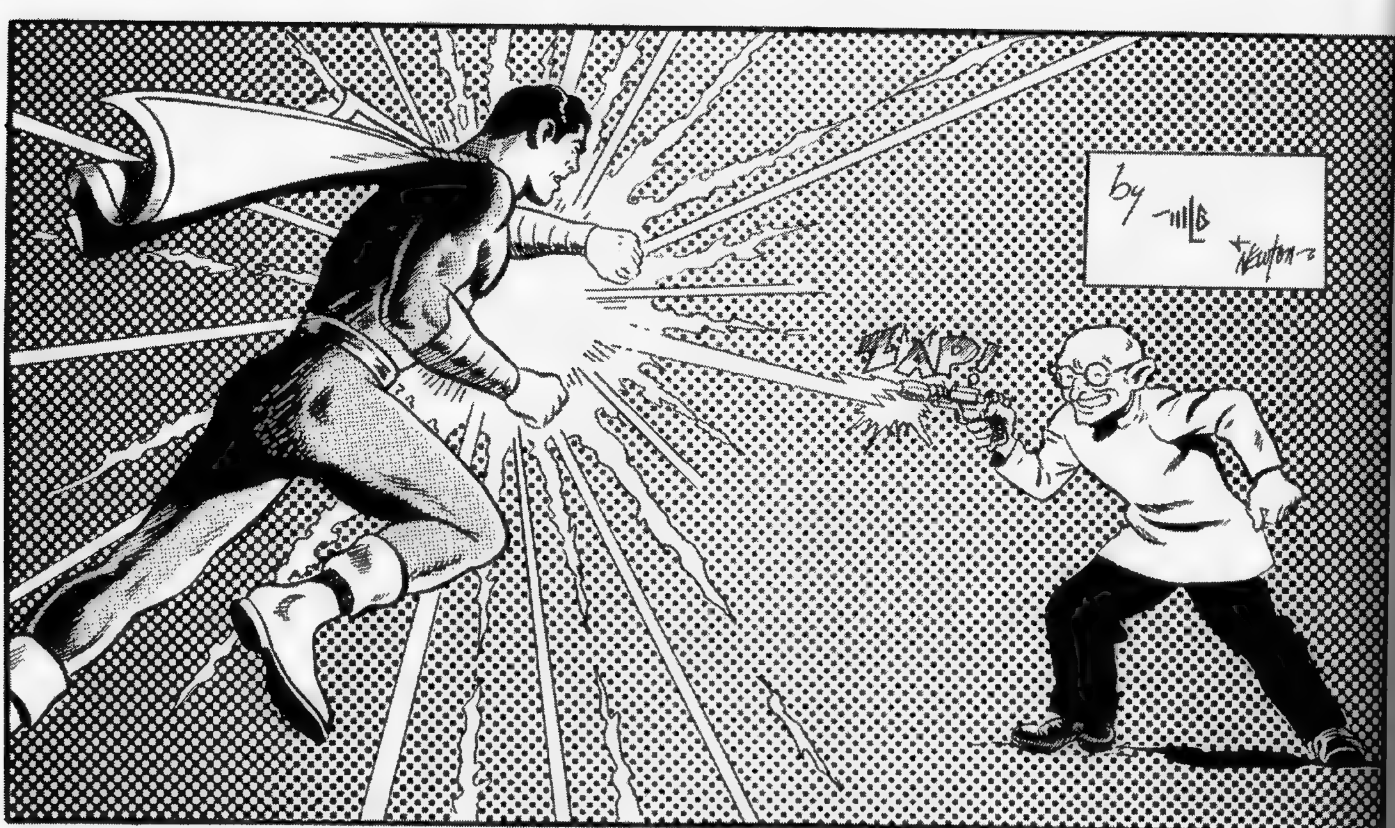
HOLY MOLEY!
LOOK OUT!

Sivana first has Solomon withdraw his power of wisdom from Capt. Marvel. This is accomplished by scratching his name from a plaque bearing the magic word, which hangs in Shazam's palace. Sivana takes Shazam back to Earth, warning the immortals to keep in touch by radio and take commands, or the old wizard dies! As they leave, Shazam prophesies: "Yes, dire days lie ahead for planet Earth, as this evil soul has his way with us! But obey Sivana in all things. Not to save my paltry life, for which I care nothing, but because it is written that Sivana will win out against Capt. Marvel! Fate so decrees!"

When Sivana lands on Earth, he sends an ultimatum to the U.N. It is read before a delegation: "From the Sivana fortress, I, King Sivana, demand that the United Nations disband! I will now rule Earth from my impregnable fortress! None of your armies will be able to smash or even dent it! From it I will pour a rain of destruction all over Earth unless I am crowned king! I have spoken! P.S. And not even Capt. Marvel can wreck my fortress. I'll even tell him where it is..by code..if he can solve it!" There follows a simple looking code. Well, we already know what Sivana does when he is crowned king! So Capt. Marvel is summoned to break the code. However, robbed of Solomon's wisdom, he is unable to do so. Taunting him further, Sivana sends Cap a map, giving exact instructions on how to find his fortress, located in the "Inferno Desert."

As Capt. Marvel speeds toward Sivana's fortress, Sivana has Hercules cross his name from the list. Capt. Marvel hits the fortress wall at full speed and bounces off. Again he tries and again he's unsuccessful. "First my wisdom, now my strength, what goes on?" Undaunted, he calls upon Atlas' power of stamina and, with a pick begins chipping away at the fort. But he collapses with fatigue as that power, too, is removed. Zeus is then ordered to withdraw Capt. Marvel's power of invulnerability. Sivana knocks Cap out with a stone. The wicket old scientist sneaks toward Cap with knife in hand, but stops when he decides to have more fun with him. Sivana revives him. Capt. Marvel, though weak, is still willing to fight. He chases Sivana back into his fortress. As he bears down upon the scientist, Achilles is ordered to take his power of courage from the list. Capt. Marvel becomes a pitiful coward and flees from Sivana. As Marvel tries to fly away, Mercury is ordered to withdraw his one remaining power, that of speed and flight. He crashes back to earth, where Sivana catches him and ties him up. Sivana brings out Shazam, "Now I'm going to stake you both out under the hot sun to die!" Without Capt. Marvel to stand in his way, Sivana sets about, once again, to conquer the Earth. After countries are brutally bombarded by Sivana's rays and rockets, the U.N. is forced to come to terms. They start drawing up surrender papers. Back on the desert, Capt. Marvel has become delirious from the heat. He mutters Shazam





and Billy Batson appears. Billy finds that the ropes that held Capt. Marvel are loose on him. He slips out of them and unties Shazam. Leaving Shazam in the shade to rest, he goes to retrieve the robe of immortality. Sivana has absent mindedly left the door to his fortress open, so Billy surprises him when he walks in. Sivana comes at him with a knife, but Billy manages a lucky punch and downs the scientist. Billy locates the robe and, eluding Sivana, returns it to old Shazam. "Saved! And now, with my life no longer in danger, I can send a telepathic call to the Rock of Eternity!" He has the immortals restore their powers to the plaque. "Now my son, speak my name!" Billy does, and Capt. Marvel returns, once more the World's Mightiest Man. Streaking toward the fortress, Capt. Marvel destroys it (in one panel!!). Sivana is found amid the wreckage. He confronts old Shazam. "You told me that I would succeed against Capt. Marvel, you dirty old liar!" "Harken Sivana! I did not lie! You did succeed against Capt. Marvel, as I prophesied! You robbed him of all his powers and had him at your mercy! But your downfall was Billy Batson!"

The last issue of Capt. Marvel, #150, contained an interesting feature lengther, "The World of Too Many Sivanas."

The begining of chapter one, "I Conquer Africa," finds Sivana in the jungles of Africa (where else?), searching for a rare mineral. Having had no luck, he angrily kicks a rock. Here, the narrative is taken up by Sivana, giving his own account of the tale: "But that stone I kicked loose! Wild hope once more warmed my poor suffering heart!" As it turns out, that stone is the very thing Sivana was searching for. An unknown mineral, emanating very special radioactive rays. He names it Sivanium. He then draws up a new plan to conquer Earth, in four easy steps. One: Enslave natives to dig ore; two: Keep Capt. Marvel away; three: Enslave human race; four: Enslave Capt. Marvel. He has no difficulty executing step one. Of course as soon as Billy Batson learns that the African region known as Zubula has been enslaved he changes to Capt. Marvel, who speeds to free them. As Capt. Marvel speeds along, he gets the world's mightiest shock. Sivana has mined Zubula with bombs equipped with Marvel Proximity Fuses! The bombs instantly detonate when Capt. Marvel comes within a mile of them. The natives will be destroyed if Cap gets any closer. He is forced to turn back.

As chapter two, "I Conquer Billy Batson!" begins, Capt. Marvel changes to Billy and enters Zubula, as he has no effect on the bombs. Billy enters Sivana's hut/lab, finding Sivana sleeping but protected by photo-electric beams. Searching the hut, he finds Sivana's list of four steps to world domination, noting that steps one and two have been accomplished. Next to the list, labeled step three, is the "Sivanium Molecular Rearranger," and, labeled step four, the blueprint for enslaving Capt. Marvel. Billy, not having the wisdom of Solomon, however, can understand neither of them. Searching further, he locates a map, showing the locations of the Marvel Bombs. He takes it and sets out to dig them up. However, the noise of taking it down awakens Sivana. As Billy locates the first bomb, Sivana sneaks up and knocks him down. "Now I'll knock you silly, brat! Why don't you yell Shazam and let Capt. Marvel beat me up? Hehhh!" "You know I can't Sivana! Not with those bombs still buried!" Billy is knocked out. When he comes to, he finds himself tied up, but without the usual gag. Sivana comes at him with a knife (again!), taunting him. "I was in no hurry! It was exquisite ecstasy to make that boy squirm and die a million deaths in advance! And when he did die, I would be King of Earth! Now hurry and read chapter three of my story!"

Chapter three is titled "I Conquer Capt. Marvel!" and as it begins, we pick up Sivana's narrative again: "Billy almost yearned for a quick death that would end his tormenting dilemma! But I withdrew the knife and had more gay fun with him! Good sport that I am, I gave him a fair and square deal!" The fair deal turns out to be that Billy gets to choose his own way of dying. Sivana offers him a choise between being boiled in oil, torn apart by a wild buffalo, squashed by an elephant, mangled by a gorilla, or buried alive! "But then, tiring of this innocent fun, I pulled my big surprise on Billy!" Sivana lets Billy live, imprisoning him in a giant bell jar. "You must live! Why, I'd kill anyone who harmed a hair of your head! Because you see, I need Capt. Marvel later! The Sivanium machine will make him my slave!" Finally "S-Day" arrives. Sivana has isolated enough Sivanium and, with his machine, rockets toward the nearest big city in Africa. Billy, meanwhile, frees himself from the glass jar by rhythmically beating it with a spoon. The vibrations shatter the glass. Reaching the Zubulan border, he again becomes Capt. Marvel and sets out after Sivana.

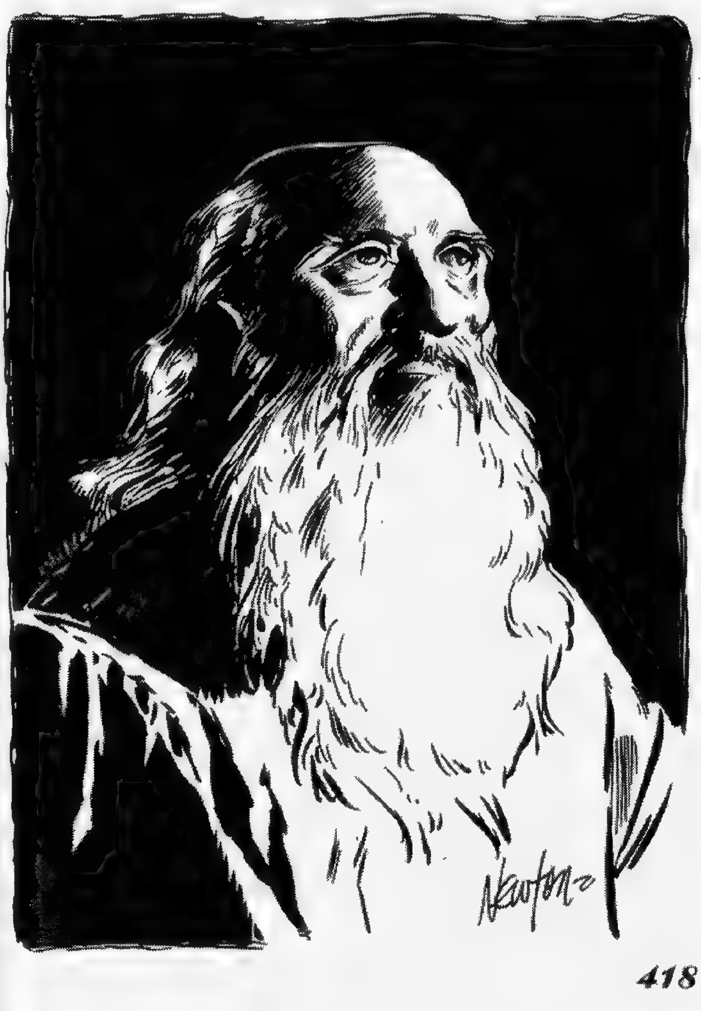
In the city, Sivana has already turned on his machine. When Capt. Marvel attempts to capture him, Sivana runs into a crowd of people. Cap is too stunned to give further chase, as the crowd and everyone else in the city, now look like Sivana! "Thus I easily slipped back to my ship, and left only a mocking note: 'Get it, idiot? The Sivanium machine is a molecular rearranger, able swiftly and painlessly to change the human head! Charged with Sivanium ions, the ray caused all their heads to change to mine! Now they not only look like me but think like me! What better, than for me to rule a world of Sivanas? Heh Heh!" The natives begin manhandling Capt. Marvel, but he easily escapes them and pursues Sivana back to Zubula, where he must become Billy Batson again. There, Billy, once again, attempts to deactivate the Marvel Bombs. Again, Sivana is watching, but this time lets him succeed. Billy says his word. "As usual, the magic bolt came down! But its course was not quite as usual! It veered away from Billy and zoomed down into my Marvel machine. It zipped right through the machine, picking up a vital property! Then that new bolt, Shazam lightning plus Sivanium, finished its job of changing Billy into Capt. Marvel! But a new and wonderful Capt. Marvel! Hehhh!" Capt. Marvel now looks and thinks like Sivana!

In chapter four, "I Conquer the World!" though, we find that Sivana has made a slight miscalculation. Since Capt. Marvel now thinks like Sivana, and since he is the World's Mightiest Mortal, he decides to become King of Earth himself! He locks Sivana up, planning to execute him later, and sets about to build his palace. Sivana manages to escape, however, and journeys to the Rock of Eternity to consult old Shazam. There, he pleads with Shazam to change Marvel back to Billy. Shazam agrees, but warns Sivana not to harm Billy, under severe penalty. Sivana agrees, and so Capt. Marvel is changed back. Sivana then begins taking over in earnest, since Billy cannot again become the evil Capt. Marvel. "I figured Billy was all washed up then, and I stopped watching him! Unknown to me, the kid still had a desperate plan in mind!" Billy journeys to the Hall of Shazam, in the old subway tunnel where he first became Capt. Marvel. He calls down Shazam's spirit by lighting a mystic brazier. "Since I cannot call on Capt. Marvel, please send the ancient gods themselves to help me, sire!" The gods appear and waste no time in destroying Sivana's machine. Billy then becomes the true Capt. Marvel and wastes no time in capturing Sivana and putting him behind bars. "Somehow it always ends this way! Curses curses curses!"

THE INANE BATTLES:

In his continuing efforts to subdue Capt. Marvel, Sivana often carried his methods to an extreme. Most adventures of this type were extremely funny.

SHAZAM



One such adventure appeared in Capt. Marvel #56 and was titled "Capt. Marvel Goes Crazy!" As this story begins, Capt. Marvel is approached by a group of scientists. Their museum has completed a display of models on the development of man, from ape-man on. All they need is modern man. Since Capt. Marvel represents the greatest of human development, they want him to model for the statue. Cap agrees and undergoes x-rays and extensive physical measurements, including a plaster cast of his body! By the time the scientists are finished, it is a harried Capt. Marvel they leave behind. Shortly, another one enters. "No no! Not another one! I can't stand it! I'm going crazy!" "Crazy? How interesting! You've been measured inside and out, physically. But I'm a psychologist. I'm here to examine your mind." Capt. Marvel is too upset to notice the the psychologist is really Dr. Sivana in disguise. Sivana has a new plan for Capt. Marvel's downfall. When Sivana's tests are over, he announces to Capt. Marvel that he's shown definite signs of insanity. Angered, Capt. Marvel throws him out. "Crazy am I? Crazy as a fox! I'll lock the door, and then can any more of them come in? Ha ha ha ha! Holy Moley! I better get ahold of myself! I'm acting a bit-er-nutty at that!"

Meanwhile, Sivana sets out to prove that the World's Mightiest Mortal is the World's Mightiest Crackpot! Having convinced the head of the Board of Mental Health that Capt. Marvel should be tested further, the board arranges to make a test with a disguised Sivana asking the questions. Sivana proceeds to cross-examine Cap with incriminating questions, such as: "Have you stopped beating little children? Answer yes or no!" Capt. Marvel comes out sounding like a nut, again. The final proof of Cap's insanity comes when Sivana slips itching powder down Capt. Marvel's back. While trying to answer questions, he begins scratching violently. The head of the board tells Cap that he's committing him to an asylum! "Whaaaat? Why that's fantastic! Impossible! I'm no more crazy than you are, sir!" "Heh heh! That's what they all say!" Capt. Marvel is taken to the asylum. Since he was legally committed, he can't break out. But Billy can, so he changes and heads back toward the museum. When he arrives, he finds Sivana there, still gloating. Billy is obviously sharper than Capt. Marvel, as he penetrates the disguise immediately: "That laugh! So, under that false beard you're Sivana! Shazam!" Capt. Marvel appears. Under duress, Sivana confesses all, and his schemes are once again brought to an end.

In "The Laugh Lotion," in Whiz #68, Sivana again disguises himself. This time as an insect exterminator. Entering Station W.H.I.Z., he approaches Sterling Morris for a job. Morris, recalling that there are ants in studio B, where Billy broadcasts, sends him there. Sivana goes right to work. After his broadcast, Billy approaches the disguised Sivana, "Is that stuff any good? Will it take care of ants?" "I don't know about the ants, but it'll take care of you, you insect! Heh heh heh!" Sivana sprays Billy with the gas, then he unmasks, drawing a revolver. He explains that Billy has just been sprayed with his newest invention, Laugh Lotion. Billy is overcome by laughter: "He's going to kill me! Haw haw haw! He'll blow my brains out! Ho ho ho! This is awful! Hee hee hee!"

Sivana's downfall is, however, procrastination. Trying to savour the moment as long as possible, he waits until Billy finally manages to say his word between gusts of laughter. Capt. Marvel appears, but he also gets a dose of Laugh Lotion and begins laughing uncontrollably. He tries to nab Sivana, but is too weak from laughter. Sivana escapes.

Having had his fill of looting stores, Sivana decides to phone the now recovered Capt. Marvel: "Greetings Capt. Marvel! Come down to Police Headquarters and watch me kick the chief of police in the teeth! I'll be expecting you! Heh heh!" When Cap arrives at the police station, Sivana has already subdued everyone there with Laugh Lotion. He kicks the chief in the teeth as Cap enters. "Capt. Marvel! Did you see it? Now I'll spray you too with the Laugh Lotion!" "Yes, but I'm hoding my dose!" Capt. Marvel knocks Sivana down and crushes his sprayer. Thinking all is safe, he breathes deeply, but Sivana reveals a spare sprayer and lets him have it. He escapes, with Capt. Marvel caught in another paroxysm of laughter. Capt. Marvel recovers soon and begins tracking the scientist by following the trail of his laughing victims. Sivana waits in his lab with three drums of Laugh Lotion he has stored there. He expects Capt. Marvel and is waiting for him with a full sprayer. Capt. Marvel enters, but wearing a gas mask! He, being immune to the gas now, begins spilling Sivana's supply! The wicked old scientist tries to run, but is hit by some of his own concoction. Capt. Marvel catches him. "Ha ha ha! Ho ho ho! Heh heh heh! Haw haw! He's beating me up!

Hee hee! He's taking me to jail! Ho ho haw haw! My plans are ruined! Oh Ha Haaaaa!"

Afterwards, Billy makes his regular broadcast: "So Sivana went behind bars at last! Ha Ha Ha! And it's not the laugh lotion making me laugh this time!"

As I'm writing this, D.C.'s "Shazam" #1 has just hit the stands. I won't bother describing it, as I'm sure almost all of you have read it by now. I thought the story in the first issue could've been better, but I'll not go into that either. It does seem fitting to me, that they revived Capt. Marvel's arch-enemy in the same issue and story that they revived him.

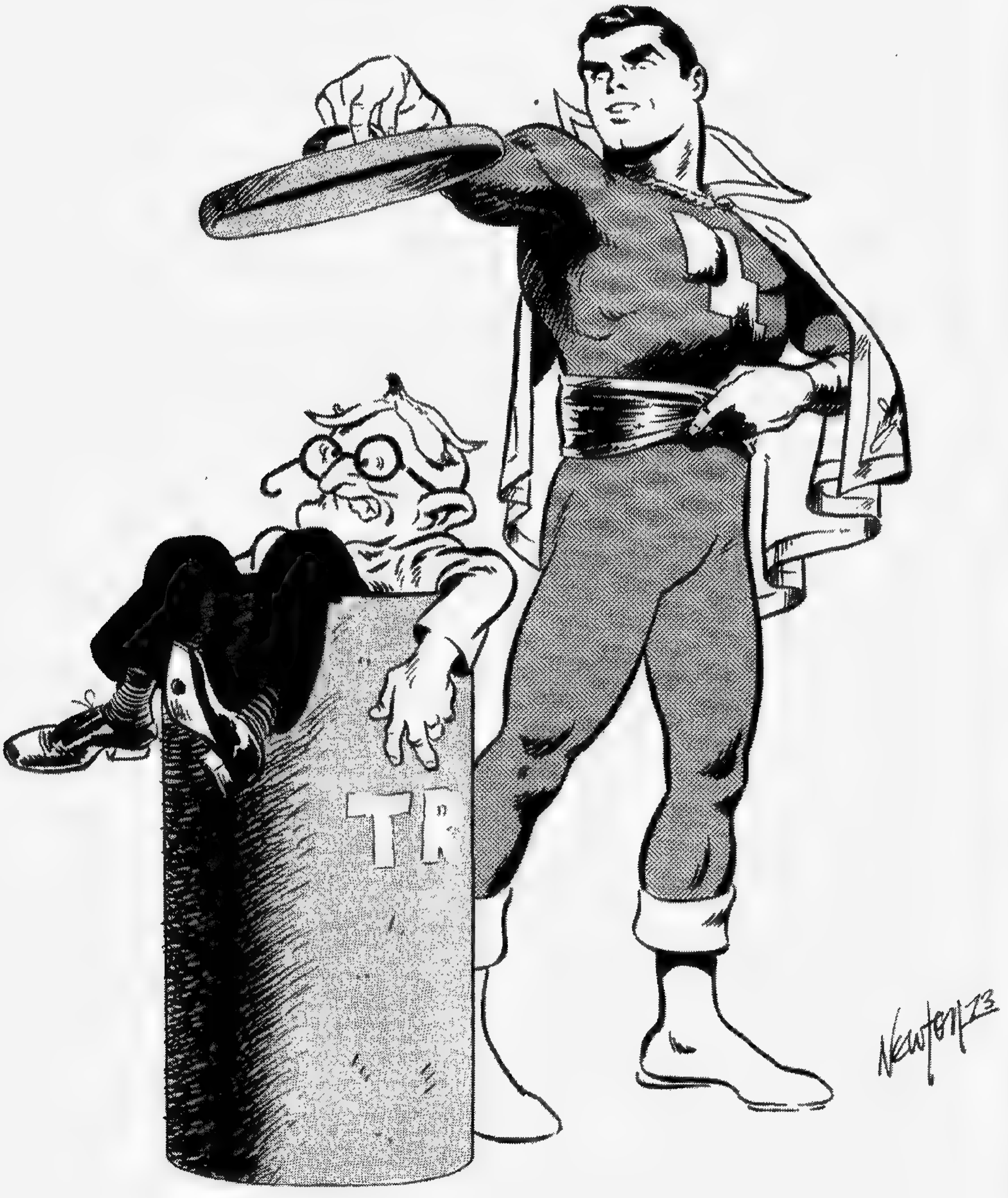
Capt. Marvel and Dr. Thaddeus Bodog Sivana. They've been enemies for 33 years. May they be so for 33 more!

Art for this article was done by: Don Newton, John Clark, Martin L. Greim and C.C. BECK.

All characters are © National Periodical Pub. 1973.

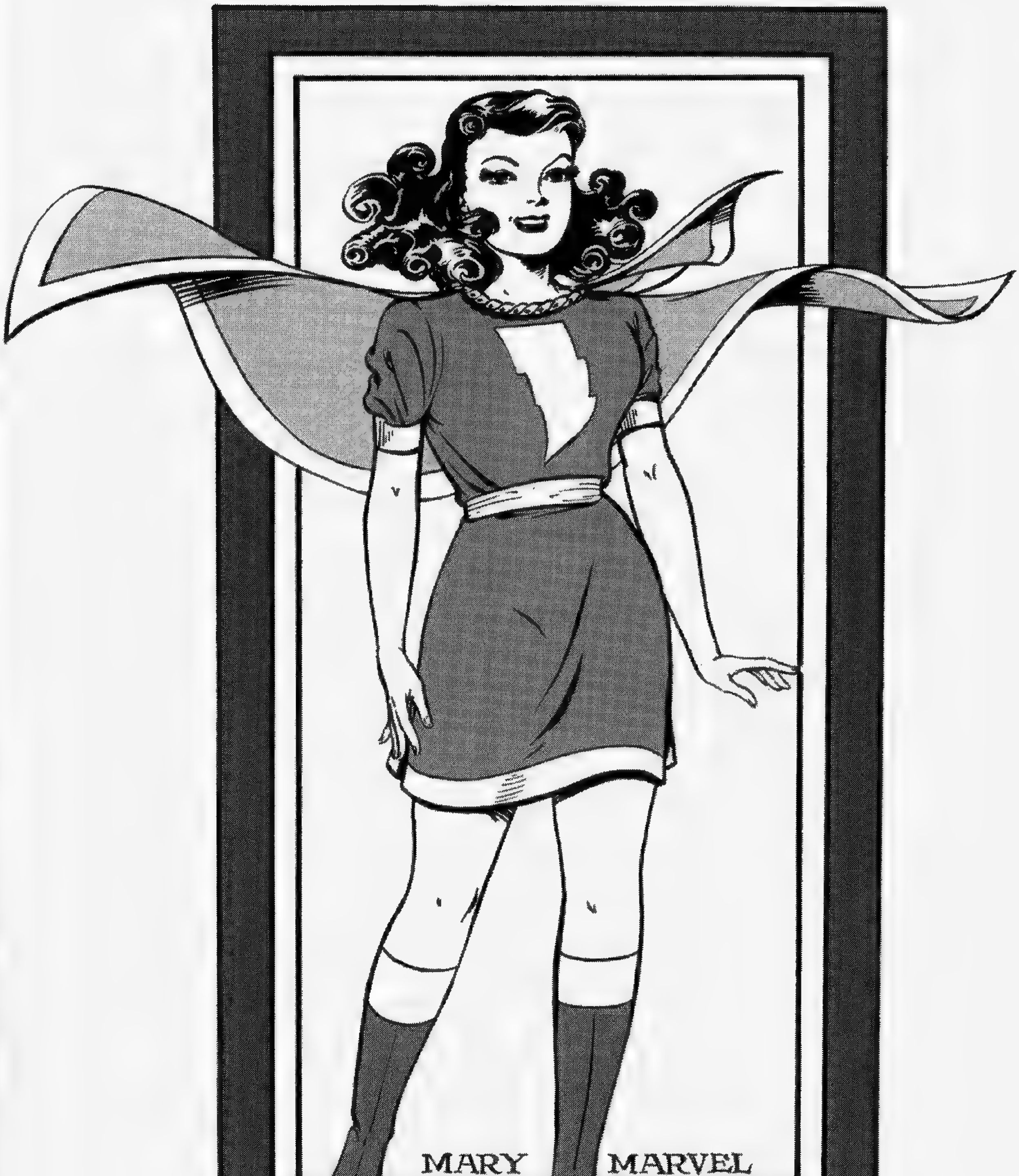
From one of the oldest Comic Book clashes to one of the newest! The second in Comic Crusader's new series "Great Comic Book Clashes" features the cosmic battle between NEW GENESIS and APOKOLIPS. This article will be written by Kirby aficionado Bob Cosgrove, and will delve into the classic symbolic aspects of the cosmic struggle between good and evil as interpreted by Jack Kirby. This article will also feature the drawing you thought you'd never see...Orion vs. Darkseid by Jack Kirby.

Martin L. Greim

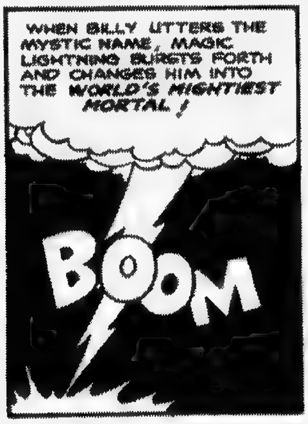


JOURNEY TO THE ROCK OF ETERNITY

by BOB COSGROVE


MARY MARVEL
by Jack Binder

Otto & Jack Binder


WHEN BILLY UTTERS THE MYSTIC NAME, MAGIC LIGHTNING BURSTS FORTH AND CHANGES HIM INTO THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL!
BOOM

Few comic creators have been the subject of as many articles and features as Jack and Otto Binder. And little wonder. First working with Harry Chesler, and then managing his own shop, Jack Binder oversaw the production of a massive amount of comic book art, as well as personally illustrating many features, most notably Mary Marvel. Most famous for his many Capt. Marvel stories, Otto Binder also scripted for Timely, National, and just about every other company in the business, as well as maintaining a prodigious output as a science fiction writer.

You can't imagine how delighted I was when Martin Greim suggested that he, Al Bradford, and I travel to upper state New York to visit the famous pair, who live only minutes apart. My enthusiasm died a bit when I learned we were going in Al Bradford's van. I was unable to decide whether the name "Dodge," emblazoned on the vehicles front, was a trade name or advice to pedestrians. Playing on my indecision, my fellow fans seized me by the cape-side and hurled me into the van. We were off!

We left in the morning light of Massachusetts and arrived at Otto Binder's home in the bright afternoon sunlight around two. Surpressing our disappointment at not finding at least a yellow lightning insignia on the mail box, we introduced ourselves to Mr. Binder, and his gracious wife. Otto is a short, portly man, with greying hair and a pencil line moustache. Eager for news of the comic industry, he leans forward during conversations, anxious to capture each word, punctuating his comments with short, animated hand movements.

As time was short, we went immediately to Jack Binder's nearby home. On the way, I quizzed Otto concerning his reading habits, hoping to take his mind off Al's driving. Otto said that he read mostly mystery and science fiction, favoring Robert Heinlein as the top sf writer. At that point, the van pulled into Jack's. While we waited for the second Binder, Otto invited us to the barn out back to see the studio and workshop that Jack uses to create the realistic figures and regalia used in the nearby historical museum, Fort William Henry. Otto led us up a narrow wooden staircase to Jack's studio loft, a small well-lit room, containing painting materials and sketch books. Resting here and there throughout the studio were pieces from synthetic Binder models...a hand here, a soldier's head there. At this point Jack joined us and invited us into his home. After introducing us to his wife, Olga, Binder bade us be seated in the living room. Pictures, large oil paintings, adorned the walls.

Jack Binder, in snow-white hair and black, thick framed glasses, is about the same height as his brother. He is an abrupt, dynamic man, who several times in the course of our conversations expressed his appreciation of Jim Steranko. This was not surprising. In attitude and demeanor, he might have been Jim Steranko forty years later, a Steranko of the golden age of comics. Informed of a colleagues departure from National, Binder waved his hand, impersonaly remarking, "I don't blame him a bit. They're impossible to work for. I never worked for anyone on any terms but my own!" For a moment, Binder's figure dissolved, and I saw the figure of Jim Steranko, sitting on my hotel bed at a New York con, telling a jammed room that "if a publisher wants me, he's got to meet my terms."

INTERVIEW:

Bob: Jack, as I understand it, one of your first jobs in the comic industry was as "shop" foreman for The Harry Chesler Studio. Could you tell us something of Chesler himself? He's sort of an unknown figure to many fans.

Jack: Well, my first impression of Harry Chesler, when I went down with Frank Gruber, who was then scripting western tales for him, to get the job, wasn't a good one. I didn't like the looks of the shop and turned him down. I went back a year later and Harry and I sat down for about an hour or so and talked. He said, "I don't want you as an artist!" And I said, "Then what the hell do you want?" He then told me he wanted me to take charge, to take over the staff. I said, "OK, fine!" and that was all there was to it.

The background of Harry Chesler is simply this...he was a man who was a visionary...a promoter...full of ideas and still is to this day. He has a natural in-

B.B. BLACK
BAM
SHAZAM

tuitive sense, to know when an artist has done his best. I've seen him have an artist do over a job 15 times. He'd pay for it, but he'd know the artist was doing his best work. He knew what he wanted and he'd get it!

Harry was originally sponsored by Benard McFadden, in our first studio on 5th Avenue. Then there was some confusion between Harry and McFadden and the shop broke up. I went on my own for a while, then several months later, Harry called me up and we started up a new organization. I think three times we sort of went off the deep end; primarily because Harry could always envision something different, something new and he'd spend his last cent on it. He always had confidence that we could make it and we did. Harry loved human beings. He was like a father to everybody.

Otto: Harry was a showman; he often did bizarre things, simply for the effect. He had pet aligators, little ones, in his office and would feed them raw hamburger. He also served them minnows, but he would chop their heads off first, so the minnows wouldn't suffer when the aligators ate them.

Marty: Of the many things connected with Capt. Marvel, one of the more interesting is Shazam's "Rock of Eternity." Can you tell us something about this, Otto?

Otto: I'm fairly certain that the Rock of Eternity was my idea. I seem to remember coming up with the plot all enthused, and Wendell Crowley was too when he heard it. It actually ties in scientifically with astronomical theory. As you know, according to the "big bang" theory, there was once a "primal atom" of super-condensed matter which exploded some 15 billion years ago or so. These particles then scattered to form the nebulas, etc. Now along with this "point" in space, there was a "point in time" too at that very spot, wherever it was. Using poetic (literary) license, I simply postulated a fixed point in the universe where this primal atom existed in a timeless state before it exploded. The rock angle was just to make it pictorial. But conceivably, there is some temporal/spacial point from which any portion of the universe, throughout time, can be reached. If you understand all this, tell me how it works, will you!

Bob: Jack, could you describe what your typical work day was like when you were running your own shop?

Jack: It was 24 hours a day. Otto: It started with him going crazy and how did it end up? Jack: Well, I wound up crazier! I hired in units of four. I'd get enough work to near work the men I had to death and when I had enough work for four more men I'd hire them. So those four were kept busy and my original crew was kept busy too. I always had enough work, because I got the business first.

Bob: What about your work day Otto?

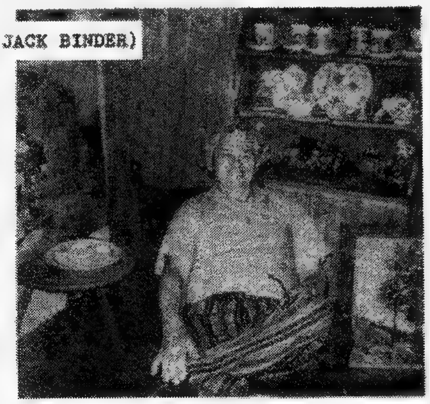
Otto: Well, as you know, a writer works alone. I'm a morning writer. I'd get going at 9 o'clock and work until I was groggy, which usually came about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The rest of the day I'd take off to recover.

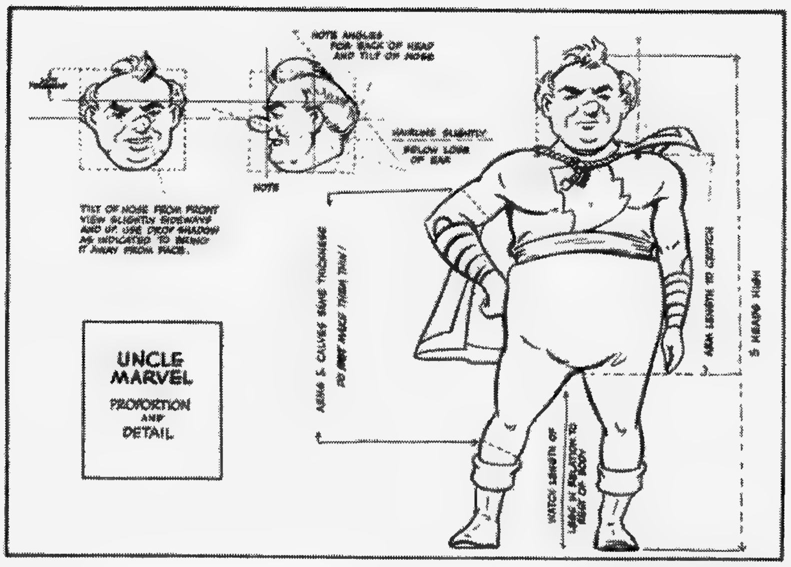
Bob: What kind of things did you read, Otto, when you were working in comics?

Otto: Everything but comics! Science fiction, detective and science books mostly.

Marty: Otto, over the years you've worked on many characters. Which would you say was your favorite?

Otto: With out a doubt, Captain Marvel or any of the Marvel Family! Other than them, I'd say Captain America was one. He was always a free and easy character. I did scripts directly for Stan Lee, in those days. I didn't work with Joe Simon until years later, when he worked for Harvey Publications.


(JACK BINDER)


NOTE ANGLES FOR BACK OF HEAD AND TILT OF NOSE
NOTE
TILT OF NOSE FROM FRONT VIEW SLIGHTLY SIDEWAYS AND UP. USE DROP SHADOW AS INDICATED TO BRING IT AWAY FROM FACE.
BELOW LINE OF EAR
UNCLE MARVEL
PROPORTION AND DETAIL
5 HEADS HIGH
WATCH LENGTH OF LEGS IN RELATION TO REST OF BODY

THIS PLATE PREPARED BY JACK BINDER

(UNPUBLISHED MODEL SHEET, DRAWN BY JACK BINDER, USED AS A GUIDE FOR OTHER ARTISTS WORKING ON THE CHARACTER.)

Bob: Marty's been working on a Capt. Marvel Jr. vs. Capt. Nazi article. Do you know who created Capt. Nazi?

Otto: Yes, it was Ed Herron. Herron was a very good writer and I think he created Captain America too. At the time he worked for Fawcett, he couldn't admit to it, because he wasn't supposed to work for any other company.

Marty: Otto, which did you find it easier to write... a super hero story, a science fiction story, or a detective story?

Otto: I think, probably, the science fiction stories. I liked doing things for the EC comics.

Bob: What did an artist have to be able to do for your shop?

Jack: The most important thing for an artist in the comic book field to know is, how to utilize the full page, with the number of break downs on that page, to consistantly have a continuity and a flow of story. Knowing how to interpret a script is another important thing. There was a panel once, that really had the boys puzzled. The script said, "show the hero and the girl standing on the shore at the beach, with the waves thundering in, and in the background show 10,000 natives coming at them throwing spears." They finally decided to see me about this problem of how to draw all that. I said, "Well getting to this point is very simple. Just show a close up of the hero, with his arm around the girl, pointing at the reader saying, 'Look at those 10,000 natives coming at us! This is the end!"

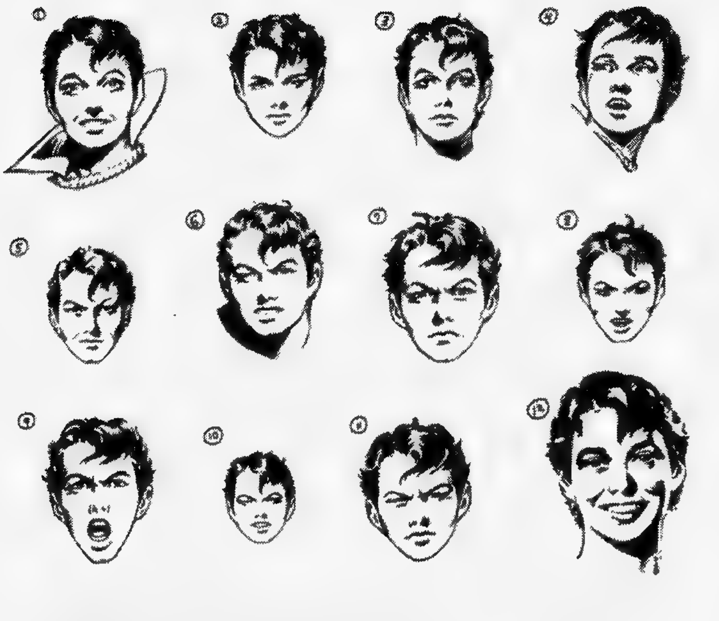
Marty: As an artist yourself, Jack, how many pages of artwork did you turn out a day?

Jack: Two complete saleable pages a day. "Look, see, think, do" is my motto. My advice to anyone learning art is to learn mechanical drawing, pattern of line development and design. Then, from there on, if they have any artistic talent let it express itself. You've got to have complete involvement in what you're doing ...just give yourself to it, or it won't happen.

Bob: Do you remember how you felt, when you got the word that Captain Marvel was dead and that the Fawcett line was no longer in the comic book business?

Jack: It didn't bother me a bit! I knew the end was near and I'd made arangements to go into another line of business.

Otto: Jack's case was different, because he was branching out into other lines of business; but in my case, my whole living was practically Fawcett Comics. I had quit DC because of the Fawcett/National lawsuit, so when National finally won the suit, it came as a big blow to me and the other artists and writers concerned. The thing that made it even worse, was that Beck and I had a syndicated Captain Marvel strip all worked out.



(UNPUBLISHED MAC RABOY MODEL SHEET USED TO AID OTHER ARTISTS IN DRAWING CAPT. MARVEL JR.'S FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.)

He even did some artwork on it. I think we had about 6 or 8 weeks of it done.

Bob: What about your brief venture with Milson Publications, Otto, and the character "Fatman the Human Flying Saucer?"

Otto: That was a big fiasco of course! Fatman, well I don't know. There, Beck and I couldn't see eye to eye. His idea of the character and mine were just so different, that I don't even know how to describe it. I had to re-write stories and Wendell Crowley, who also worked at Milson, had to re-write stories. We just never could get together on the character.

*NOTES ON FATMAN:
Fatman came into being in 1967. He was a hero with three identities...(1) Van Crawford, a wealthy hobbyist; (2) Fatman, the green and yellow clad heavyweight hero; and (3) Saucerman, the human machine. Due to an amazing bio-genetic serum, given to him by a little green alien from outer space, Fatman possessed the power to change at will into a human flying saucer. Fatman was no slouch in human form either. He was tremendously strong and was a master of karate!

Bob: Another Milson book, which never came out, was to be called "Captain Shazam!" Can you tell us a bit about it?

Otto: Capt. Shazam? Well, sorry to disapoint you, but I don't really remember much about him. He was completely different from Capt. Marvel, of course; had to be, for obvious legal reasons. If I recall, I did some story outlines, which I no longer have, but that's as far as it got.

Bob: What are your reactions on the newly returned Captain Marvel?

Jack: I'll give you my reactions on what has already died once. We tried a revival with Little Nemo. I spent thousands of dollars on Bob McCay, Windsor McCay's son, who had his father's technique down to perfection, but lacked the imagination and vitality to get it across. I talked Street and Smith into publishing it, did a few layouts for Bob McCay, and Otto even did a few scripts for it; but when Windsor McCay died, Little Nemo died with him! It's almost impossible to revive something and get the same life and dynamism into it that the original had. Now Beck, on the revived Captain Marvel, retained his technique, but because he's so far away from the original inspiration, the book just isn't the same. In the old days this was part of our life. With these characters, we put heart and soul into them. I put my staff through a regular training course on how to interpret a script. You had to believe you are this character. Although I had 40 people working on one script, in every possible area, the whole thing had to tie together just as it does in the movies.

Otto: We had regular "bull sessions" in those days. We could talk for hours about comics. In fact, we met for weekends for six years, just talking shop. Even though the meetings were social, the conversations always centered around work. We lived it!

Jack: Our instance in the so called "Golden Age" of comics, was a period of time similar to the early movies. No one knew what they were doing. We had to just take the bull by the horns and make this thing go! There were no guide lines set for us to go by. Fortunately, because of the thrill of just doing it and being involved in it, the comics worked.

Bob: Otto, do you think today's Captain Marvel stands a chance of selling today, or do you think he's basically a "1940's" character?

Otto: I wonder. I just don't know. It's just so light and whimsical. It just doesn't seem to be the real Captain Marvel. The artwork yes, because it's Beck, but the stories just don't have the flavor I felt in the old days. As Steranko said in his "History of the Comics"..."The Magic Is Gone!"

Marty: Otto, when you sat down to write the Marvel Family stories, did you first plan out how much action would be given to each member? Did Capt. Marvel get the best treatment?

Otto: The stories were tailored to give them all equal exposure. Sometimes one of the Marvels would get a bit more of the action, but the formula was to send each one of them out on a separate mission and bring them together for a big ending.

Bob: You are perhaps best remembered Jack, for Mary Marvel. Will you tell us a bit about your work on her?

Jack: I had nothing to do with creating Mary Marvel, except that after I got a hold of the character, I made it my personality. Her character had been already set before I got to her.

Otto: I wrote the first story that she appeared in. That was in Captain Marvel #18. She then had her own lead feature in Wow Comics, beginning with issue #9. (November, 1942)

Jack: I'll take credit for Freckles Marvel and Uncle Marvel, not as creations, but as persons. When the script was given to me, I created the personality of Uncle Marvel. (At this point, Jack showed us a model sheet he'd done for Uncle Marvel and this prompted Otto to ask a question that had been in the back of his mind for years.)

Otto: Jack, did you model Uncle Marvel after me?

Jack: Not consciously Otto. Actually, I modelled him after what I wanted to be--what we'd all like to be - the lovable old fraud who gets away with everything.

*NOTES ON UNCLE MARVEL:
Uncle Marvel made his first appearance in a Mary Marvel story in Wow Comics #18, October, 1943. He had no Shazam powers, but found Mary's lost diary, recounting her adventures and tried to pull off a complicated swindle. He claimed to be Mary's uncle and as he and Mary said Shazam together, he doffed his suit of breakaway clothes with a pull of his zipper. He then stood revealed in a makeshift Captain Marvel suit. Uncle Dudley (as was his real name) planned to form Shazam Inc. and sell the services of Mary and the other Marvels. Mary discovered that Dudley was a fraud, when he said Shazam aloud and didn't change. However, when Uncle Marvel risked his life to push a child out of the way of an oncoming truck, Mary decided to humor him. She talked Dudley into making Shazam Inc. a non-profit organization and as a result, Uncle Marvel was around, on and off, as a supporting character in the Marvel stories for a long time.

(OTTO BINDER)

(THE BROTHERS BINDER)

*NOTES ON FRECKLES MARVEL

Freckles was Mary's girl friend and although she didn't pretend to have any powers, like Uncle Dudley did, she still dressed up like Mary Marvel and participated in Mary's adventures now and then.

Marty: Will you tell us something about how Mary Marvel was used to sell girl's dresses?

Jack: Sterling Advertising and another company wanted to use Mary Marvel to sell dresses. They gave me the assignment of doing the first ad. Of course, I did it in my usual simple direct way. The agency had a young art director there who wanted 99 changes made. I told him, "Look, I presented a sketch to you, you okay'd the sketch and I have the layout. I have presented you with the final work. This is it! There will be no more changes, from here on!" He gave me quite a talking to, but I told him he could take it or leave it. So they ran the ad, the way I did it, and they sold 30,000 dresses, from $2.98 to $3.98 a piece. Of course I did the ads after that. When they tried to analyze the success of that first ad, I told them that to the kids, Mary Marvel was a real character. They related to her. They were a part of Mary Marvel and Mary Marvel was a part of them. So when they saw her in those pretty dresses, they bought them to be like her.

Marty: In addition to creating Mary Marvel for Fawcett, didn't you create Supergirl for National too, Otto?

Otto: Yes, along with Mort Weisinger. He was really an idea man. Most editor's aren't, you know.

Marty: How did you feel about writing Supergirl, after having worked on Mary Marvel?

Otto: It was kind of wierd, in a way. I had worked for DC for a while, but stopped when the National/Fawcett lawsuit took place. I was asked to come back, if and when Capt. Marvel fell by the wayside. I did just that, when National won the suit. Mort kept poo-pooing Capt. Marvel, saying it was a bunch of junk. Mary Marvel was a crazy idea! So, a couple of years went by and one day Mort said to me, "I've got a great idea!...Supergirl!" Of course I didn't say, "You don't mean Mary Marvel do you Mort?" To me, it was like reliving the past.

Marty: Otto, what do you think about the trend toward relevancy in comics?

Otto: My thought is, that comics are escape literature and that they should be kept in that never-never land, disconnected with the problems of everyday life.

(JACK BINDER, MARTIN GREIM, AND OTTO BINDER IN FRONT OF JACK'S BARN STUDIO.)

Bob: Jack, what do you think of the artwork in comics today?

Jack: I think that they are over embellished. They're over drawn. They seem to think that the fineness of the comic art carries the comic story. It doesn't! The artwork on today's strips is just too complex. There's just too much there, for the simple thing you want to say.

At this point, it was time for a break! As Jack served coffee and cookies, we talked about some of the artists of the forties. Otto said:

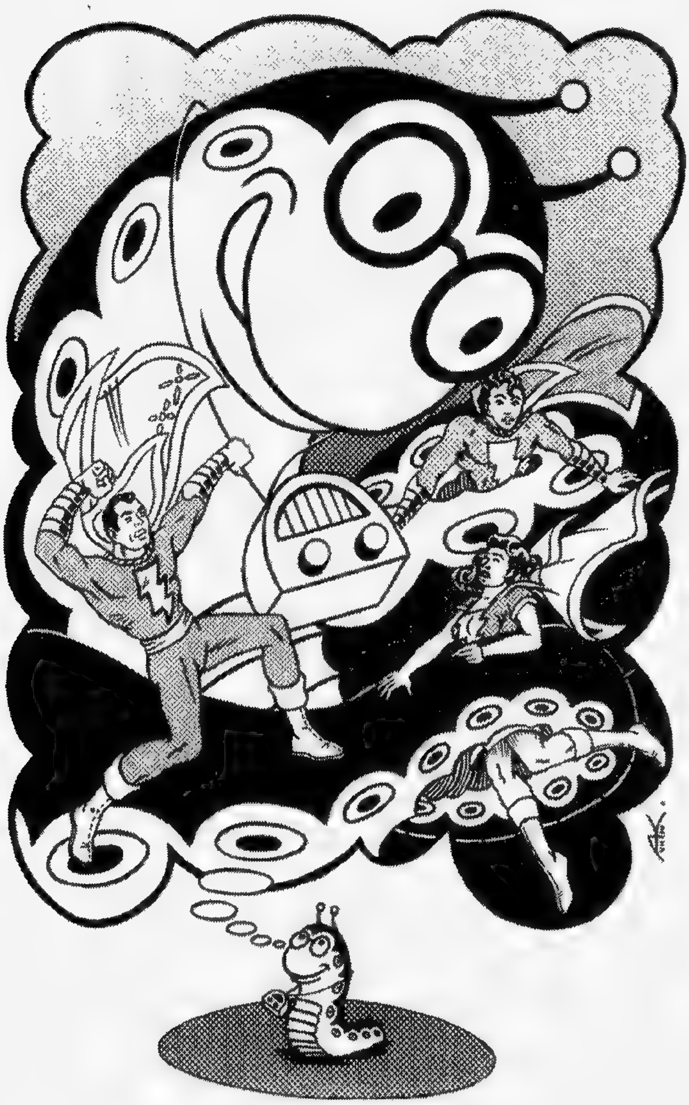
"I always considered C.C. Beck a sort of minor genius. It's a shame he never received more recognition. He sat down and worked out his own, unique approach to comic art and story telling. But he was a unique figure in many other ways too. For example, he would create his own musical instruments and make up his own tonal scale, and play them. And you were telling me about his new thing, where he constructs realistic weapons out of paper scraps."

Artist, Mac Raboy, who was poles apart from Beck's easy simplicity, also evoked memories from the Binders.

"Mac Raboy," Otto mused. "There was a prima donna! Impossible to work with. He always complained that there were too many action scenes."

HERE HE IS, FATFANS!
THE ONLY COMIC HERO WITH
3 IDENTITIES...
FATMAN
B.B. BLACK

Mr. Mind's Day Dream



"Too many action scenes?" I repeated. "Isn't that a rather unusual complaint for an artist?"

"Well, maybe. Mac didn't care about plot, about conflict. He wanted beautiful, fairyland scenes for Captain Marvel Jr. to float through."

"Many of Raboy's shots were remarkably similar," Marty said. "I know stats were used, but how many?"

"Just a minute!", Jack was up from his chair, running upstairs. "I have some pages of Raboy's, I'll show you." Jack soon returned, pages in hand. Interspersed with patches of Raboy's precise brush work were photostats of previous work. Indeed, almost every panel was a total, or partial stat. Jack told us that Raboy did all the paste-ups himself, refusing to let anyone else touch his page.

After bidding a temporary farewell to Jack, who presented us with a beautiful set of landscape prints, drawn in a detailed pen-and-ink style very different from the simple line drawings of his comic book heyday, we returned to Otto's.

Otto led us up to the second floor to a small room crammed with books--his studio. I mentally deleted the typewriter and added a drawing board, and I could see a smaller version of Steve Ditko's studio. Most of the books were multiple copies of Otto's recent paperbacks, but the room also contained some comics, books by Heinlein and Wells, and multiple copies of Steranko's "History of Comics."

Al, Marty and I then followed Otto downstairs to greet Jack and his wife. Over a leisurely dinner, we swapped horror stories. Every fan has one, but the Binders both had gems. Otto one day deciding to give all his "worthless" extra copies of Capt. Marvel, et. al, to the neighborhood kids, and Jack, tired of carting his magazines around, loading them all in barrels and taking them to the dump.

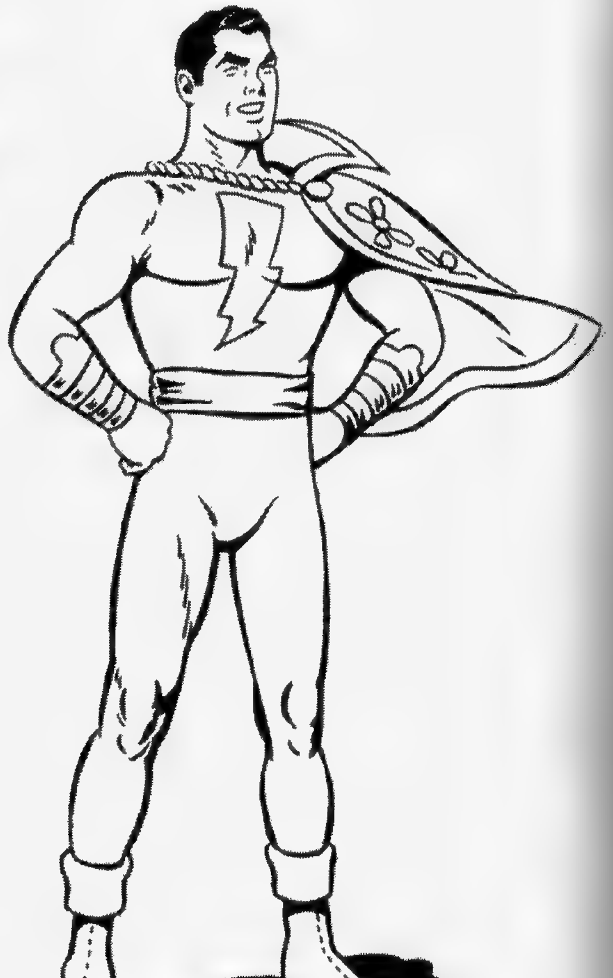
About eight, as dusk settled, we thanked our hosts and headed for Vermont to see Tom Fagan. It certainly had been a fascinating afternoon. One that we would all long remember. As we drove, a thunder and lightning storm overtook us, prompting Al to try a few unavailing "Shazam's." I told Al that I heard the ghostly voice of the old wizard muttering, "No way, Al!" However, cynic that he is, he refused to believe me.

All Capt. Marvel related character are c National Per. Pub. 1973

Fatman, The Human Flying Saucer is c Milson Pub. Co. Inc. 1973.

Photos for this article by...Al Bradford.

*SPECIAL THANKS TO: Jack Binder for allowing me to print the hitherto unpublished drawings of Mary Marvel, Uncle Marvel and the Mac Raboy model sheet, from his personal scrap book...and to C.C. Beck, Bill Black and Anthony Kowalik for this article's art.



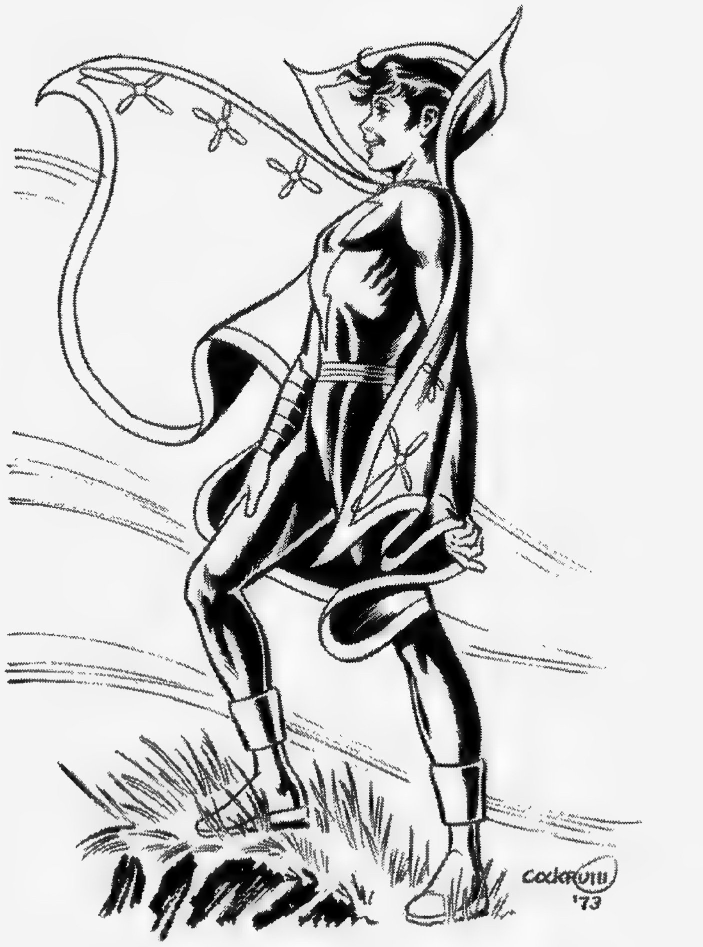
C.C. BECK
1970

CAPT. MARVEL JR. FLIES AGAIN!

An Interview With:

DAVE COCKRUM

by Martin L. Greim



I've known Dave Cockrum for quite a few years and it pleases me no end to see him becoming one of DC's top artists. His work on The Legion of Super Heroes is something to behold and now he's Capt. Marvel Jr.'s new artist. I interviewed Dave at the 1973 New York Comic Art Convention and obtained the following information.

Q. Dave, how about giving us some background information on yourself; such as where you were born, art training, etc.

A. I was born in Pendelton, Oregon, in November of 1943. I took art in high school and attended Southern Illinois University and Colorado State University; majoring in art at both places. However, most of what I do in the comics is self taught or learned from observation. I also learned a lot as Murphy Anderson's assistant, back in 1971. I picked up a lot of invaluable tips from Murphy on how to work and especially on inking. My inking was crummy, until I started working with him.

Q. What was your first published work?

A. Well, I don't know if you'd consider this professional work, because I wasn't paid for it; but I did a drawing for the back cover of a short lived science fiction magazine called "Spaceway Magazine." My first paid for work was for Warren Publications. The story was called "Prisoner of the Pool" and appeared in Vampirella #11.

Q. You are now doing the Capt. Marvel Jr. strip at DC. Did you apply for this job, or was it assigned to you?

A. I asked for it! When Capt. Marvel first appeared at National, I thought, "Gee, I'd like to draw Capt. Marvel!" But then I thought about it and realized that only C.C. Beck should draw that. After a little more thought, I decided Jr. would be the sort of thing I'd be better at. I did 3 pages of sample material to show Julie Schwartz, in hopes he'd let me draw it. I guess a lot of people asked to do the strip, but none of them cared enough to do any samples; so I got the job.

Q. How is Jr. going to be handled? Is he going to be more in the Beck or Mac Raboy style?

A. I'd like to make it look as much like Raboy as I can; but not being Raboy, or as polished as he was, it will take quite some time to work up to that grade of art. The Raboy image is what National wants and they've given me stated pages of his work for reference, plus I have a few comics with Raboy's work myself.

Q. How many times a year are you doing Jr.?

A. It will alternate, as a back-up feature in Shazam, about every three issues. The other two features are Mary Marvel and The Marvel Family. Bob Oksner will be doing Mary Marvel and Kurt Schaffenberger will do The Marvel Family.

Q. Jr.'s stories were often more substantial than Capt. Marvel's. Is National intending to do them that way?

A. Well, I don't think they really know what to do with the character right now. You might even think the first story is a little silly. It's about a gang who's stealing elevators, for a rare mineral they possess, melting them down and exporting them to a foreign country for a secret weapon they're building. I think Jr. will probably have more solid stories, as soon as they decide on which direction they want to take him.

Q. What's your work day like?

A. It's hard to rate how fast I work, because I do so much goofing off. I have 16 lizards, 3 newts and a turtle in my studio and I like to watch them while I'm working. I have to feed 'em and change their water and all that too. When I do a comic page, I pencil it completely first, then I go back and ink it. I don't pick selected panels to ink first. Recently I discovered pens. I've got some fountain pens that use india ink and I'm so delighted with the results, that I'm putting more pen work into my strips. When I ink with a brush, I use a #3 Robert Simonds Lancer water color brush. This brush has a good thick barrel, so I can get a good hold on it. It's kind of an unusual brush to ink with, but I like it.

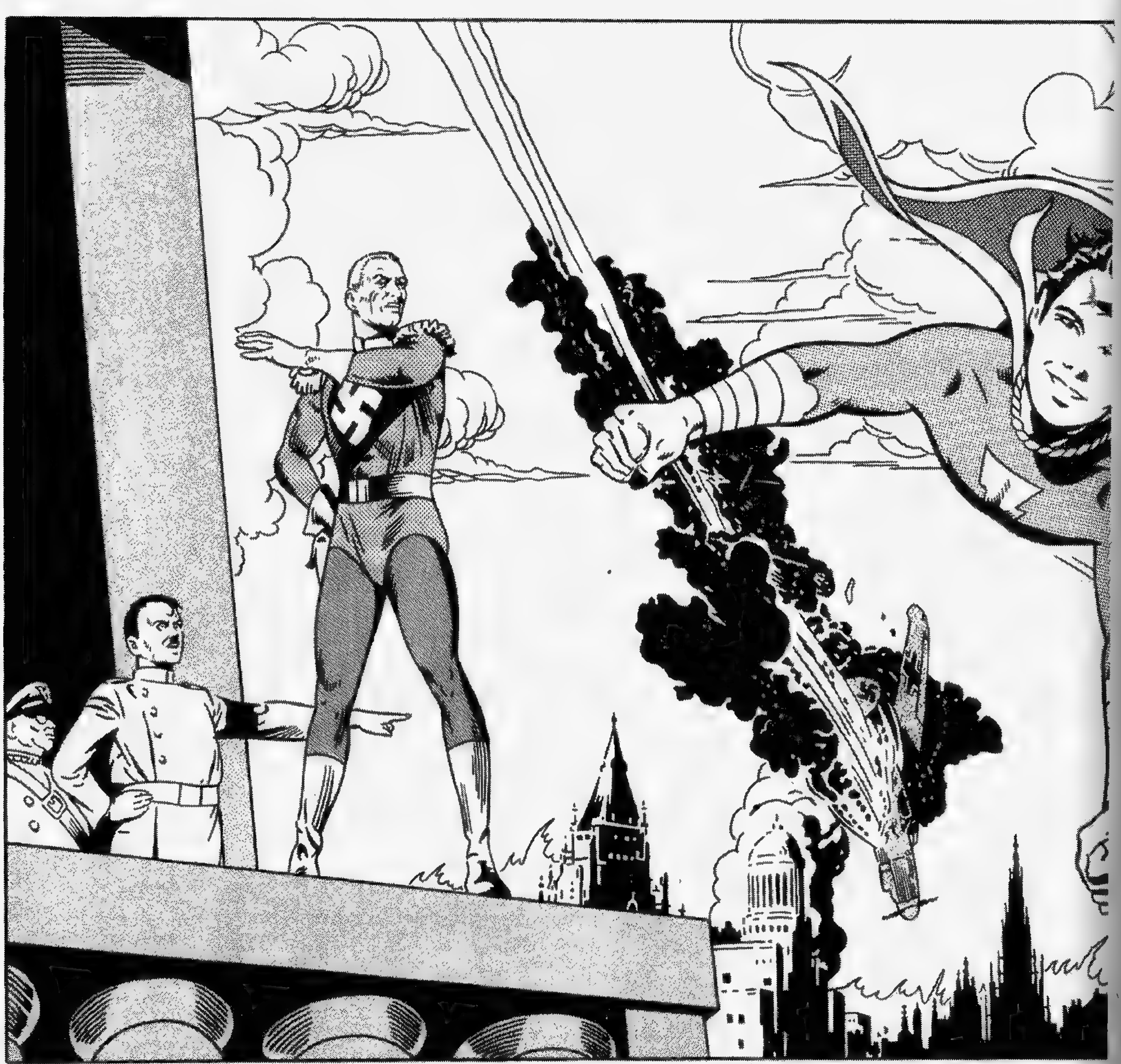
Q. Do you work during the day or the evening?

A. I get most of my work done between the hours of 8 in the evening and 4 in the morning. There's less distraction then.

Q. Is there any difference working with Elliot Maggin, who wrote the Capt. Marvel Jr. story, and Cary Bates, who writes the Legion of Super Heroes stories?

A. Yes. I've done two of Elliot's stories and I've just been handed the scripts. When I do a Legion story, I sit down with Cary and we have a bull session first. This way some of my ideas show up in the Legion stories. I get away with a lot in the Legion series, but nothing that doesn't have the approval of Julie Schwartz. He's got an eye like a hawk.

Dave's work combines the styles of Anderson, Adams and Kubert; not to mention the strong emergence of his own. It's a pleasure to view his fine work!



CAPTAIN WITH A CURSE

by

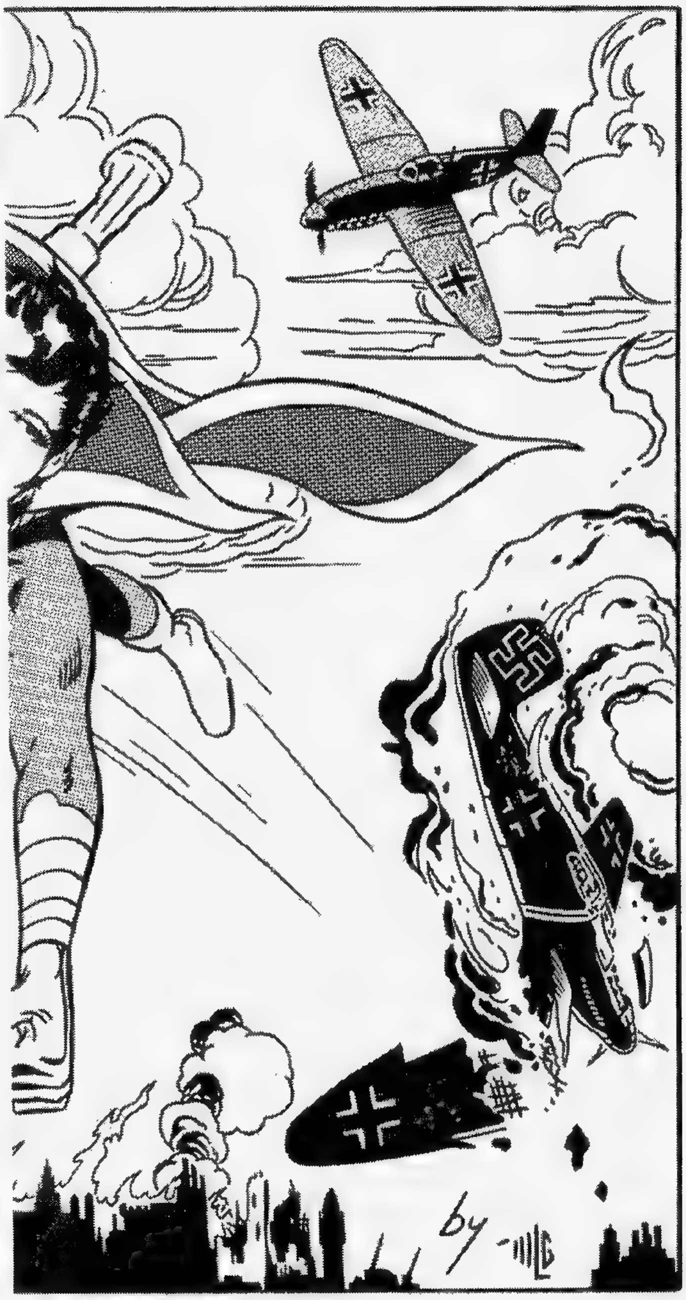
Martin L. Greim

Powerful, dynamic, possessing terrific strength and physical ability. Words like these are usually reserved for super heroes. However, in this case, they are refering to a super villain...CAPT. NAZI!

Capt. Nazi was all of the above, plus, in later stories, he could even fly. He was Nazi Germany's challenger to the super heroes of the democracies. Capt. Nazi burst upon the scene, in the December, 1941 issue of Master Comics. (#21) These were good times for him, for he had not yet brought about the curse that would plague him until the end of his comic book career. Glory was his, as Adolph Hitler himself introduced him to his warlords. Hitler pulled a cord, drapes fell back and there stood Capt. Nazi. A handsome man, a man of might - his face marked with a Heidelberg dueling scar. His costume consisted of a dark green torso, light green legs, red gloves, belt, colar and boots. (The colar, gloves and belt would later become yellow and the boots blue.) From his belt hung a holster containing a steel gray Luger automatic. Yellow epauletts matched his short cropped blond hair, and on his chest, in the center of a large black circle, was a white Swastika, the symbol of Nazi Germany.

As the amazed warlords looked on, Hitler showed Capt. Nazi pictures of four of America's heroes: Capt. Marvel, Bulletman, Spy Smasher and Minute-Man. Capt. Nazi's assignment..."Rid America of those weaklings called heroes!" Capt. Nazi proceeded to show what he would do to America's heroes, as he smashed his fist through the wall, destroying the heroes pictures that had hung there. Then, after a brief display of his powers, he left to "Blitz" America.

Before we follow Capt. Nazi to America, let's take a look at the art and writing. Capt. Nazi was created by Fawcett Editor, Ed Herron and he treated the character quite seriously. Because of this, one could almost see Capt. Nazi as a hero, rather than a villain. Another thing that was treated seriously was the art. This story was drawn by Mac Raboy and unlike many artists of



the time, he didn't make Hitler, or the Nazis, look or act like clowns. It should be noted too, that the shots of Capt. Nazi drawn in this story, would be used again and again in future stories featuring the villain. Reverse shots, reduced or enlarged photostats, used in combination with other drawings, made up many of the Mac Raboy panels. Raboy did the actual placing of the photostats on a page and he was very creative about it. He used them as an aid to meet deadlines. Where many artists drew quickly and effortlessly, Raboy labored over his assignments. The results, however, were masterpieces!

It is now sometime later in America. From out of nowhere, Capt. Nazi drops into Times Square and wreaks havoc. Before he departs, he issues a challenge to Bulletman and all of America's other heroes. A short time later, when this incident is reported to police headquarters, Jim Barr, police scientist, prepares to answer the challenge as Bulletman!

Barr, a brilliant scientist who had once been a weakling, built up his body after he tried out a drug he invented to make criminals honest citizens. The drug transformed him into a man of great strength. Barr then perfected a gravity helmet that not only gave him the power of flight, but attracted bullets fired at him, and bounced them harmlessly away.

As Bulletman is about to fly off into the cold evening sky, he is met by none other than Capt. Marvel. He too had been challenged by Capt. Nazi and for the first time, these two heroes joined forces to combat the Nazi menace. In order to cover more territory, the two split up; each covering a different section of the city.

Meanwhile, Capt. Nazi walks down a darkened passage way of a local subway station. With unbelievable power, he rips up the iron rails. He smiles, believing the subway train will crash, killing all its passengers. With only seconds to spare, Capt. Marvel arrives and stops the speeding train. "Curses! It's Capt. Marvel!", exclaims Capt. Nazi as he rushes away. "I'd stay and knock his ears off...but I got work to do."

It is at a crowded fairground where Capt. Nazi strikes next. He begins throwing people about like rag dolls and even goes so far as to shoot one who tries to resist. Seeing a large ferris wheel, he rips out a bolt that will cause it to fall, bringing death to all its riders. This time it is Bulletman who saves the day. "Hello, Capt. Nutsy!" is his remark, as he lands a savage blow to Capt. Nazi's jaw and then streaks off to gently lower the ferris wheel to the ground. A terrific battle follows, with neither side winning. In order to escape, Capt. Nazi takes a small boy hostage by holding a gun at his head. The boy is later saved by Bulletman, after Capt. Nazi throws him off a cliff.

By this time, a million dollar reward is placed on the German's head...dead or alive! In reply to this, Capt. Nazi threatens to blow up the Brooklyn Navy Yard and defies anybody to stop him. Inside the navy yard, Capt. Nazi steals from the shadows and prepares to throw sticks of dynamite at some unfinished ships. Suddenly he is confronted by Capt. Marvel! Before Capt. Marvel can move, he gets the dynamite full in the face. After the smoke from the blast clears, Capt. Nazi is gone, leaving only a note which the unharmed Capt. Marvel reads to the now arrived Bulletman and Bulletgirl. "You'd better keep your snooping nose in Whiz Comics, Capt. Marvel..because I'm coming over there next month to beat your brains out! I'll get Bulletman later." Yes, Capt. Nazi was heading for Whiz and disaster!

Never one to heed warnings, Capt. Marvel was present in Whiz #25, the December 1941 issue. After finishing his radio broadcast, Billy Batson is told by his boss, Mr. Morris, that Capt. Nazi is at the WHIZ sending tower. A quick Shazam and Capt. Marvel is on his way. Meanwhile, Billy's young friend, Whitey Murphy, climbs the tower after Capt. Nazi; only to be thrown off by the powerful German. Seconds before he hits the ground, Whitey is saved by Capt. Marvel. This proves an adequate diversion, for Capt. Nazi is able to elude Capt. Marvel to cause more trouble at a new power plant near a great dam. Here, he tampers with the giant turbines; so that once switched on, they can not be shut off again. The turbines whirl faster and faster and almost explode until Billy Batson, who was covering the opening of the plant for WHIZ, changes to Capt. Marvel and brings them under control.

It is at a test run of a new army plane, that Capt. Marvel finally catches up with Capt. Nazi. Capt. Nazi is in the plane's cockpit, about to kill the pilot, when Capt. Marvel flies up, pulls Nazi out and sends him flying with a terrific punch. Down, down, plunges the dreaded German, until he cleaves into the dark waters below.

Fate decreed that Capt. Nazi would not drown! A boy and his grandfather, who had been fishing in the bay, race to save him. As they pull him into the boat, the boy notices the strange costume, but it is too late. Capt. Nazi drowns the old man and delivers a crushing blow, with a boat oar, that sends the boy into the water. Capt. Marvel sees the boy drowning and quickly saves the lad. Rushing him to the hospital, he is told the boy will be dead before morning.

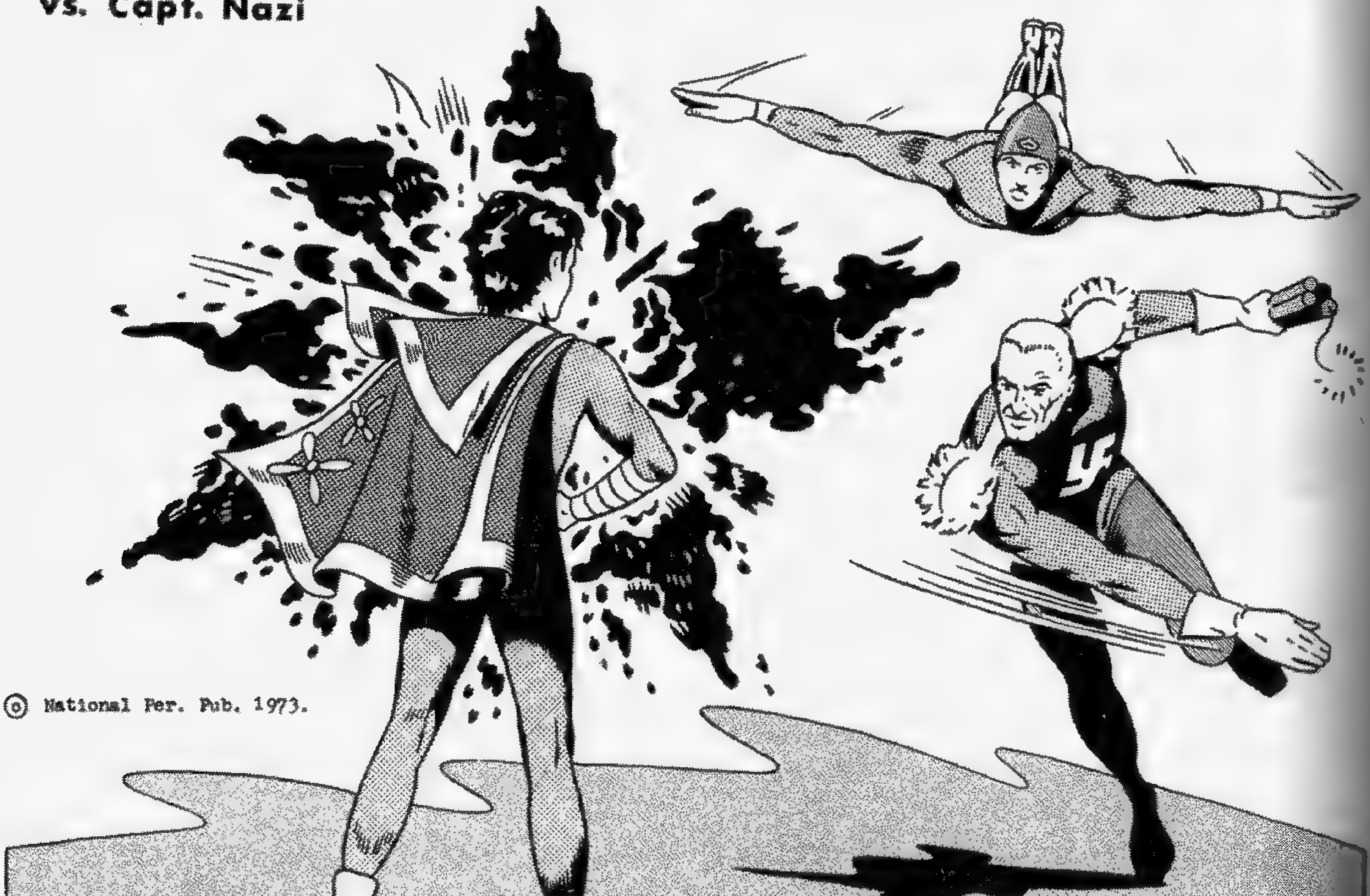
Shortly after midnight, Billy Batson sneaks into the boy's hospital room and carries him off. A short time later, he lays the boy at the foot of old Shazam's throne. Lighting the magic urn, the spirit of Shazam appears. Billy pleads for help, but is told by Shazam that what has happened cannot be changed. However, Billy, as Capt. Marvel, can pass on some of his powers to the dying boy. Billy speaks the name of the wizard and the red clad form of Capt. Marvel appears. The injured boy rouses, and murmers the name of his hero... Capt. Marvel! Again the magic lightning crashes and where once lay the crippled boy, now stands a healthy youth in a red, blue and yellow uniform similar to Capt. Marvel's. Capt. Marvel Jr. is born!

Jr. is told he must use his powers to help others and especially to bring Capt. Nazi to justice. He is also told that by saying Capt. Marvel again, he will change back to his original shape. He found that when he resumed his normal form, that his leg remained crippled due to the blow Capt. Nazi had dealt him. Capt. Nazi had killed an old man and crippled a young boy, but in so doing, he had cursed himself with a nemesis that would haunt him until the end of his days.

Capt. Nazi, as yet unaware of Capt. Marvel Jr., returned to the pages of Master #22 to create more chaos. A villain called Dr. Eternity was killing people, from a list of ten, by pouring boiling wax over them. However, Bulletman and Bulletgirl were so hot on his trail, that he enlisted the aid of Capt. Nazi. The duo go after Eternity's next victim, Sir Henry Welch, but are foiled by the intervention of Bulletman. As Bulletman pursues the evil duo, he comes upon a small lame boy, who he thinks is lost. He soon learns this is not the case and that the boy has the powers of Capt. Marvel. To prove this, the boy yells the name of his hero and, in a flash of lightning, Capt. Marvel Jr. appears. Together, Jr. and Bulletman locate the two villains, just as they are about to kill their next victim. The battle is on! Bulletman locks in combat with Capt. Nazi, as Jr. downs Eternity. Capt. Nazi throws an axe at Bulletman that misses and hits Jr. on the back of the head. Naturally it has no effect on the boy with the powers of Capt. Marvel. Jr. turns and for the first time, Capt. Nazi feels the power of what he had helped create. Jr.'s fist slams into the pride of Nazi Germany! It is a fist Capt. Nazi will feel again and again in the pages of Master and Capt. Marvel Jr. Comics in the months to come. Capt. Nazi does manage to escape though, and after Dr. Eternity is turned over to the police, Jr. and Bulletman ponder where he will strike next. However, Bulletman was never again to encounter the Nazi super man, for with issue #23 of Master Comics, Capt. Marvel Jr. would have the lead feature strip. The only other hero to battle Capt. Nazi again was Capt. Marvel himself, in Capt. Marvel Adventures #22. Capt. Nazi was one of Mr. Mind's "Society of Evil" members and he was trying to steal two black pearls. To own both gave the owner a crystal ball effect of any event he wished to see. Capt. Nazi had already stollen one pearl and was off to India to obtain the mate. The pearl was in the eye of an idol and a tremendous battle takes place for it, with Capt. Marvel beating Nazi; but losing it to another member of "The Society of Evil"...Ibac.

Issue #23 of Master Comics saw Capt. Nazi trying to kill the President of the United States. He loosened a train car bearing the President and sent it streaking down a grade. Jr. knocked Nazi off a cliff and saved the train from destruction. It seemed certain that Capt. Nazi had been killed in the fall. However, this was not so, for in issue #26 of Master Comics he turned up again. This time he teamed up with Mr. Macabre, a villain Jr. had encountered in Master #24. Both were defeated by the young marvel and again Nazi was thought dead...killed in the destruction of a Nazi sea raider off the coast of England. Saved for the second time from a watery grave, Capt. Nazi was pulled from the drink by an unsuspecting English patrol boat, in Master #27. Once in London, he set off false air raid alarms to pave the way for a real air strike. Jr. foiled the plot by capturing a signaling device used to call the Luftwaffe and led the Nazi planes into a squadron of British aircraft. At the end of the story Capt. Nazi was captured by Jr., but vowed no prison could hold him. He was right too, for he escaped in Master #28 to capture U.S. production wizard, Frank Edsel. This story featured some of the best Mac Raboy art yet, as Jr. goes to Germany to free Edsel. It was about this time that Capt. Marvel Jr. Comics #1 came out. (Nov. 18, 1942) The first issue featured a brief 3 page repeat of Jr.'s origin and a battle with Capt. Nazi as well. In Master #34, Capt. Nazi was given an added power...the power to fly! By inhaling an invention called "Flying Gas" he was able to soar like a bird. In Capt. Marvel Jr. #8, Capt. Nazi tried a different ploy. He attempted to convince the Allies that he had repented, so he could clear the way for an invasion of America. Both Capt. Marvel Jr. and the U.S. Army defeated him this time. Capt. Nazi's battles were endless and filled with frustration. I'm sure he rued the day he brought Capt. Marvel Jr. into the world and became The Captain With A Curse!

Capt. Marvel Jr. and Bulletman vs. Capt. Nazi



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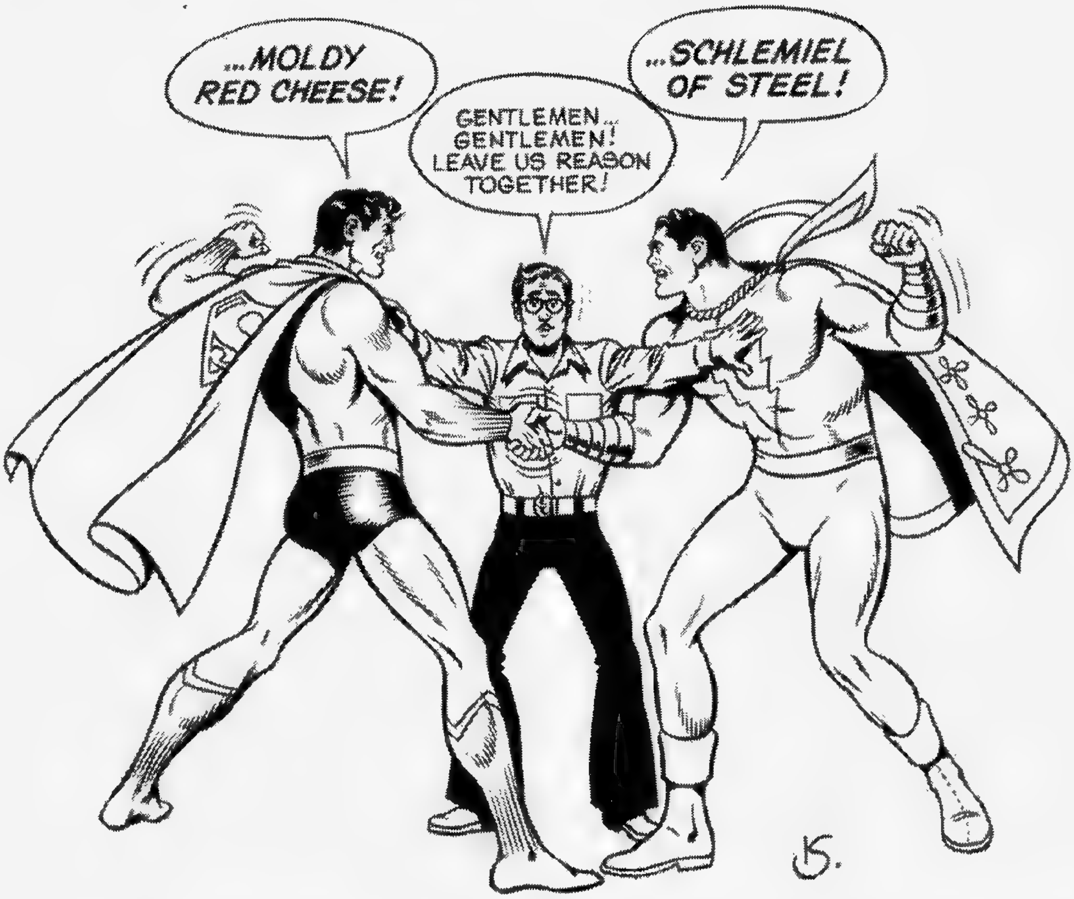
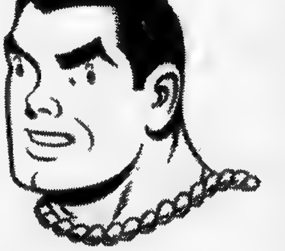
OH-OH! THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR....


...MOLDY RED CHEESE!
GENTLEMEN... GENTLEMEN! LEAVE US REASON TOGETHER!
...SCHLEMIEL OF STEEL!

SCHAFFENBERGER !

by Martin L. Greim



In the picture above, Kurt Schaffenberger steps between the two mightiest heroes in comics...Capt. Marvel and Superman! Kurt knows both of these heroes intimately, for he is one of the few artists to have ever drawn them both. Recently I contacted Kurt to ask if he'd do the cover for this issue. As you can see, he came through with a beautiful rendering! Kurt was also kind enough to submit to an interview and do the above drawing. Before we get into the interview, let's take a look at Kurt's background. "Jimmy Olsen" #155 contained his autobiography. It read as follows: "I was born on a small farm in the Thuringian Forest of central Germany, where I spent the first seven yeare of my life. In preparation for my career as a cartoonist, I tended geese, hearded goats, and hoed potatoes. When my family migrated to the U.S., we settled first in Hartford, Conn. but moved to suburban West Hartford shortly thereafter. I went through public schools there, graduating from high school first in my class, as a result of which I was awarded a scholarship which I used to enter Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y. While attending Pratt, I worked four summers in a machine shop to help pay my way.

On graduation, the first job I was able to land was with Jack Binder at his studio in Englewood, N. J., which was turning out art work on a production line basis for the then newly emerging field of comic books. The staff consisted of about 15 men, most of us from the same graduating class at Pratt.

While looking for rooms in Englewood, N.J., I met the football coach of one of the local high schools, who told me that he'd be shortly vacating his flat and suggested I see about taking it over - which I did. This coach subsequently achieved a degree of fame in a place called Green Bay. His name was Vince Lombardi, and he was also responsible for my meeting the girl who later became my wife in that it was the landlady of the aforementioned apartment who introduced me to her.

Most of the characters, with the notable exception of Capt. Marvel, that we worked on at the Binder Studio have long disappeared into limbo--Bulletman, Blackstone the Magician, Ibis the Invincible, Fighting Yank, etc., etc.

Exactly one year to the day after getting out of Pratt, I was mustered into the U.S. Army, where I spent the next four years, three of them in Europe. I went overseas with the 1st Special Service Co., which had the prime function of running shows, movies, sporting events, and other forms of entertainment for the troops in England. The posters that I prepared for these events brought me to the attention of a major who had run an art agency in civilian life and who was then in the process of setting one up for the army. For the next two years, we turned out training posters, charts, graphs, and displays for the army until the Battle of the Bulge made those activities seem somewhat superfluous, resulting in the disbanding of our unit.

Learning that an outfit called the Office of Strategic Services was looking for German-speaking personnel, I joined the O.S.S. and spent the next six months in Intelligence and counter-espionage work until my discharge in late '45 as a Master Sergeant.

Back in civilian life, I drifted naturally to the field I knew best--comics, working mainly for Fawcett Publications on the Captain Marvel series until it was halted in 1953. After that, I spent two years doing general art work in a small studio, but I always kept one foot in the comic book field, drawing for such companies as Classics Illustrated, American Comics, Marvel Comics, and others.

When National was looking for an artist for the Lois Lane magazine which was about to start, I applied for and got the job. I stayed with Lois until 1968 when I was assigned to the Supergirl book.

Along with newsstand comics, I have done considerable work in the commercial comics field, primarily for Custom Comics and doing special books for diverse accounts as Howard Johnson, Chrysler, General Motors, the New York Police and Fire Departments, U.S. Air Force, various utility companies and many others.

I am married, the father of two children (a married daughter and a son), and am presently living in suburban New Jersey."

Interview

The first question I asked Kurt was prompted by his Superman meets Capt. Marvel drawing. To my knowledge, there is only one other drawing ever published of these two together, done by the same artist who worked on both of them, and that appeared in "Lois Lane" #42, July, 1963.

Q. In the splash panel of "The Monkey's Paw!" you had Superman bowling over a batch of super heroes to get to Lois. In that panel, you had Capt. Marvel as one of the flattened heroes. Did you slip this by the D.C. Editors, or was it spotted?

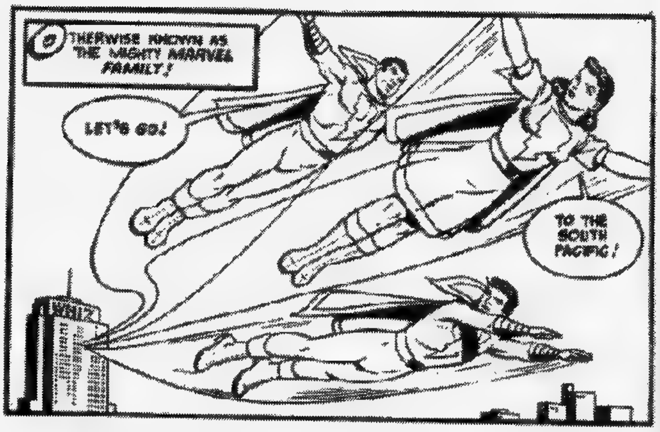
A. The story is that you slip very little past any of the editors at National. Mort Weisinger and I both got a chuckle over this, seeing as we both figured that Captain Marvel was a dead issue, and putting him in as one of the flattened heroes was somewhat symbolic.

Q. What was your first published work?

A. Well, at this "point in time", that's a little bit hard to say seeing this is now over 30 years ago. I do recall that the first job that I worked on at the Jack Binder studio was doing backgrounds for a Captain Marvel story. Other than that I really couldn't say what the first character that I worked on was. It strikes me it would be someone like "Bullet Man", "Bullet Girl" or "Blackstone the Magician" or possibly "Mr. Scarlet and Pinky." I really couldn't say at this point.

Q. Will you elaborate a bit about your years at Fawcett and the Binder Studio?

A. First, my time at the Binder Studio was not years; it was exactly one year between the time I got out of art school and went into the Army. There were about 15 of us, all from the same graduating class at Pratt Institute. We started at the Binder Studio which consisted of an old barn behind the house where Jack lived. Most of the other fellows who worked there went on into different lines of endeavor. Some stayed in the art field; others got completely out of it. The only notable exception who is still in the comics field would be Ken Bald who does the "Dr. Kildare" strip for King Features Syndicate.

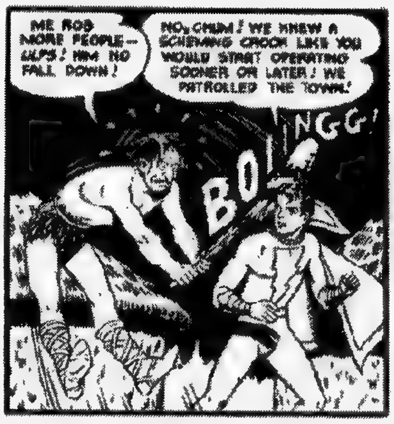

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE MIGHTY MARVEL FAMILY!
LET'S GO!
TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC!
WHIZ

When I got out of the Army in late '45, I contacted Wendell Crowley, who was then an editor at Fawcett's, and had been more or less of an office boy back at the Jack Binder Studio and thru him I got right back into the comics field, starting on "Ibis the Magician", my first strip, when I got out. My years at Fawcett after the war were quite happy ones. I had just gotten married; we had started raising a family; we had a group going of other people who worked down there at Fawcett's, including Clarence Beck, Jack Binder, Otto Binder, Pete Riss, Charlie Tomsey and others. We used to get together socially, as well as having business contacts. All of this came to a screeching halt in June of 1953 when I received a phone call from Wendell informing me that Fawcett was no longer in the comic book business. A sad day indeed!

Q. What were your feelings when the Capt. Marvel series ended?

A. I can only say it was one of utter and total dismay. At the time this happened, it was one of the periodic slumps in the comic business and I spent almost two years pounding on doors looking for more work. I finally went into a studio in New York with an artist's agent named Epworth and, between the two of us, we managed to get enough work together to keep me going for a while.

It was during this period that I was doing some work for American Comics and Marvel comics which, at that time, I believe was under a different name. I also did one book for Classics Illustrated called "Soldiers of Fortune". In the summer of '57, when the family and I were on vacation up in Maine, I received a long distance phone call from Otto Binder informing me that National was looking for an artist to do the Lois Lane book, which they were contemplating putting out at this time, and that he had recommended my name to Mort Weisinger. I called Mort up from Maine and made a date to see him, brought in some samples and got the job doing the Lois Lane book.


ME ROB MORE PEOPLE--ULPS! HIM NO FALL DOWN!
NO, CHUM! WE KNEW A SCHEMING CROOK LIKE YOU WOULD START OPERATING SOONER OR LATER! WE PATROLLED THE TOWN!
BOINGG!

Q. When you were working on Capt. Marvel, did you ever find yourself comparing your work with C.C. Beck's?

A. Well, of course I had to, because the main character was one Beck had developed and I had to make mine compatible to his. However, I do believe our approaches were a little bit different in that I tried to get a little more realism and Beck's was more of a cartoony approach than mine.

Q. Of the characters you've worked on, do you have any particular favorite?

A. I would have to say that my favorite is still Lois Lane, for the reason that I took a character which had played a very minor role in the Superman strip and developed a personality that was, I think, distinctive and unique.

Q. Has your artwork been influenced by any particular artist?

A. Well, when I first got into the comics business it was, of course, Alex Raymond, Milton Canniff, Hal Foster and artists like that that I admired tremendously, and still do to this day. I never tried to exactly emulate any of them. I just took them as a point of departure and tried to develop a style of my own.

Q. What were some of the characters you worked on at American and Marvel?

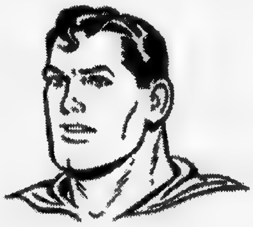
A. The majority of the stories that I did there were one-shot features. Some of the stories were mysteries, some of them were romance features. There was no specific character that I did for either of those companies.

Q. What were your thoughts on drawing Superman in Lois Lane after doing Capt. Marvel for so long?

A. At that point I was glad to have any one feature or character to stick with after having had these aforementioned years of just batting around with a character here and a character there. I didn't find any great difficulty in drawing Superman because he was just another muscle-bound super-hero in a long union suit. One minor difficulty was that Superman was being drawn by other various artists and the styles were not necessarily alike. Wayne Boring did one Superman, Curt Swan did another Superman and there were several other artists that were also working on the character, so I had to develop a sort of compromise which was Superman, but was still my style.

Q. What's your work day like?

A. I generally start about 9 o'clock in the morning and work thru until 5:30 or so in the evening, with a break for lunch. Then we have dinner, and most often I will come back in the studio and work until about 10 o'clock at night. I generally pencil a story completely first and then take it in for lettering and then bring it home and ink it. My average pace of working is to pencil two pages a day or ink two pages a day, so the total output would be one complete page a day.



Q. When were you born?

A. I was born December 15, 1920.

Q. What artist tools do you work with?

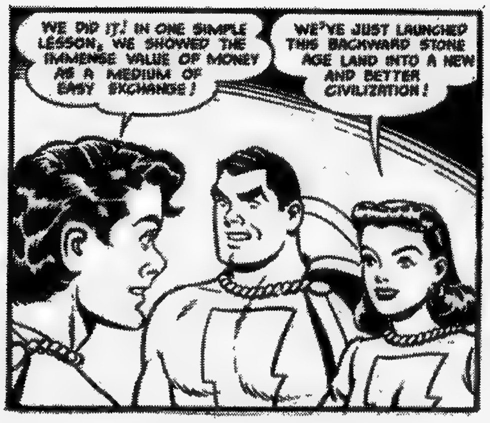
A. They are basically quite simple. Depending upon the temperature and humidity, I will pencil with anything from a number F to a number 4H pencil. In other words, If the humidity is relatively high you need a softer pencil in order to make a drawing on the paper. When I ink, I use a Windsor-Newton Series 7 No. 1 water color brush, and a fine pen to do the pen work.

Q. Do you have any favorite artists in the comic book field today?

A. I have to be totally honest and say that I really don't know very much about the artists in the comic book field, because I don't really read comics that much.

Q. What are your opinions of todays comic book industry?

A. I would say that I believe that there will always be a place for comic books, although I do not think they will ever regain the popularity that they once had before the advent of television. I think the main problem that the industry has today is one of distribution, for the reason that our prime outlets of years ago - the Mom and Pop candy stores - are rapidly disappearing. I've heard one publisher admit, at one of the Academy of Comic Book Art meetings, that as many as 60% of all comics published never see the light of day. They stagnate in a warehouse somewhere! I think until such time as they can get this distribution problem straightened out, comics will continue just putting along like they have been for the past 15 years or so, nobody really making any big money in them nor making any large impact on the population as a whole. I still feel that the comic book is vital and should be a larger factor in the entertainment field than it is, but until such time as we can get this distribution problem straightened out, I'm afraid we are just going to sit where we are. I don't know the answer and I don't think anybody else does, unfortunately.


WE DID IT! IN ONE SIMPLE LESSON, WE SHOWED THE IMMENSE VALUE OF MONEY AS A MEDIUM OF EASY EXCHANGE!
WE'VE JUST LAUNCHED THIS BACKWARD STONE AGE LAND INTO A NEW AND BETTER CIVILIZATION!

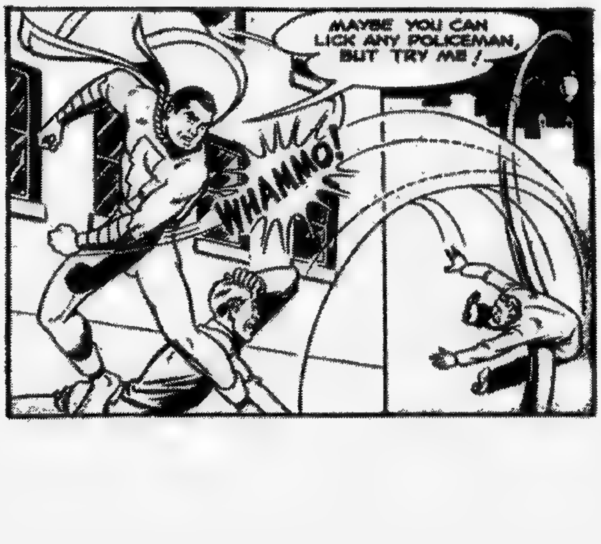
Q. What is your opinion of ACBA?

A. I have attended several of their meetings and they were interesting, which is about as much as I can say for them. I am a member of the National Cartoonist's Society, which I joined initially in order to see if I could do something about the condition of the comic book field as far as the artist's rates, the reprints and other facets of the comic book's industry were concerned. Unfortunately, I found out that it's mainly a club-type atmosphere, where guys can get together to pat each other on the back, have a few drinks together and shoot the bull. As far as doing anything constructive and concrete, I have yet to see any evidence of it. As for the awards dinners that they have at the ACBA and also at the National Cartoonist's Society with their "Reuben Awards" and ACBA with their "Shazam Awards", I have very mixed feelings about those. I consider them much too self-serving, like the Oscar Awards in the motion picture industry. It seems that all we are doing, really, is patting ourselves on the back and saying "aren't we great."

Q. Do you have any hobbies?

A. Well, with a 7-room house to take care of on weekends and the little free time that I do have as a free-lancer, I really don't have that much time for hobbies. I did used to do some skiing during the winter, but that came to an abrupt halt with the advent of my 50th birthday, the arrival of my first grandchild and my being flat on my back with a severe case of sciatica.

Q. Now that Capt. Marvel has been revived, what do you think his place will be in today's comics?


MAYBE YOU CAN LICK ANY POLICEMAN, BUT TRY ME!
WHAMMO!

A. I wish I had a good answer to that question. I really don't know. I'm afraid a good deal of the popularity of Captain Marvel right now is due primarily to nostalgia. I have always considered Captain Marvel a much better character than Superman in this sense that Superman took himself much too seriously, whereas Captain Marvel has always been approached tongue-in-cheek.

Q. How much of the Captain Marvel art are you going to be doing?

A. I have finished one Marvel Family story for Julie Schwartz and I'm now doing a Captain Marvel that I should be starting on Monday. As to how much more I'm going to be doing on the Marvel, I really don't know. There is a question as to whether I'll stay on Jimmy Olsen, which I've been doing for the past year and a half, or whether I'll switch over entirely to the Captain Marvel characters. Right now, I'm doing the Marvel feature along with Bob Oehsner. We are rotating every other month.

Q. Do you have any favorite newspaper strip?

A. Yes, my favorite would be "Gasoline Alley" in the dailies, as well as "Beetle Bailey" and "Hi and Lois". Also, "On Stage" as far as the art work goes, although I do wish Leonard Starr would get his stories moving along a little faster; I think they drag far too much to hold reader interest. The reason I do enjoy that strip, however, is it has, in my estimation, the best art work of any of the daily strips that I have seen recently.

Q. What is your opinion of relevant comic book stories?

A. I belong to the school that believes that if you want to send a message you should call Western Union. I think as far as newsstand comics are concerned, they should be geared primarily toward entertainment. I do believe, however, that the comic medium has never been utilized to its greatest extent as far as an educational or instructional tool is concerned; but if you are going to sell comic books on a newsstand I think most people - most kids - buy them with the idea of being entertained, and the message bit, I do not believe, goes over that well. But I could be wrong.

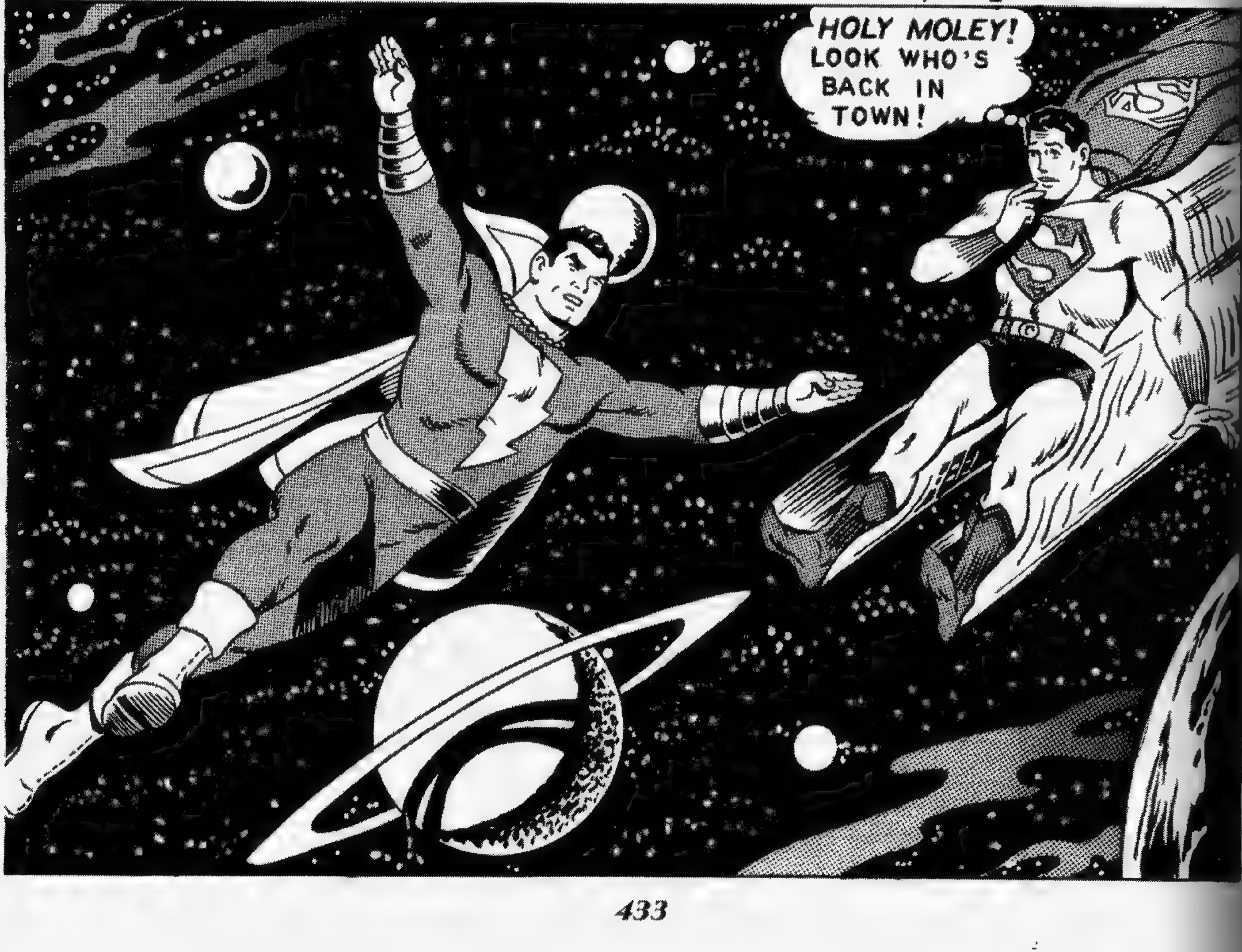
With that, my interview with Kurt Schaffenberger comes to an end. I want to thank Kurt for giving us some insight into his career! Kurt's art has always been the perfect blend between serious and humorous. This range is something very few artists can accomplish. He is also a man with a sense of humor. Take a look through some of his Lois Lane stories and you'll see him drawn into some of the crowd scenes, also look at the name he uses whenever one of his characters gets a box of candy..."Schaff's Candy." It's always a pleasure to read a story drawn by Kurt and with C.C. Beck leaving Captain Marvel after issue #11, it certainly looks like a job for SCHAFFENBERGER!

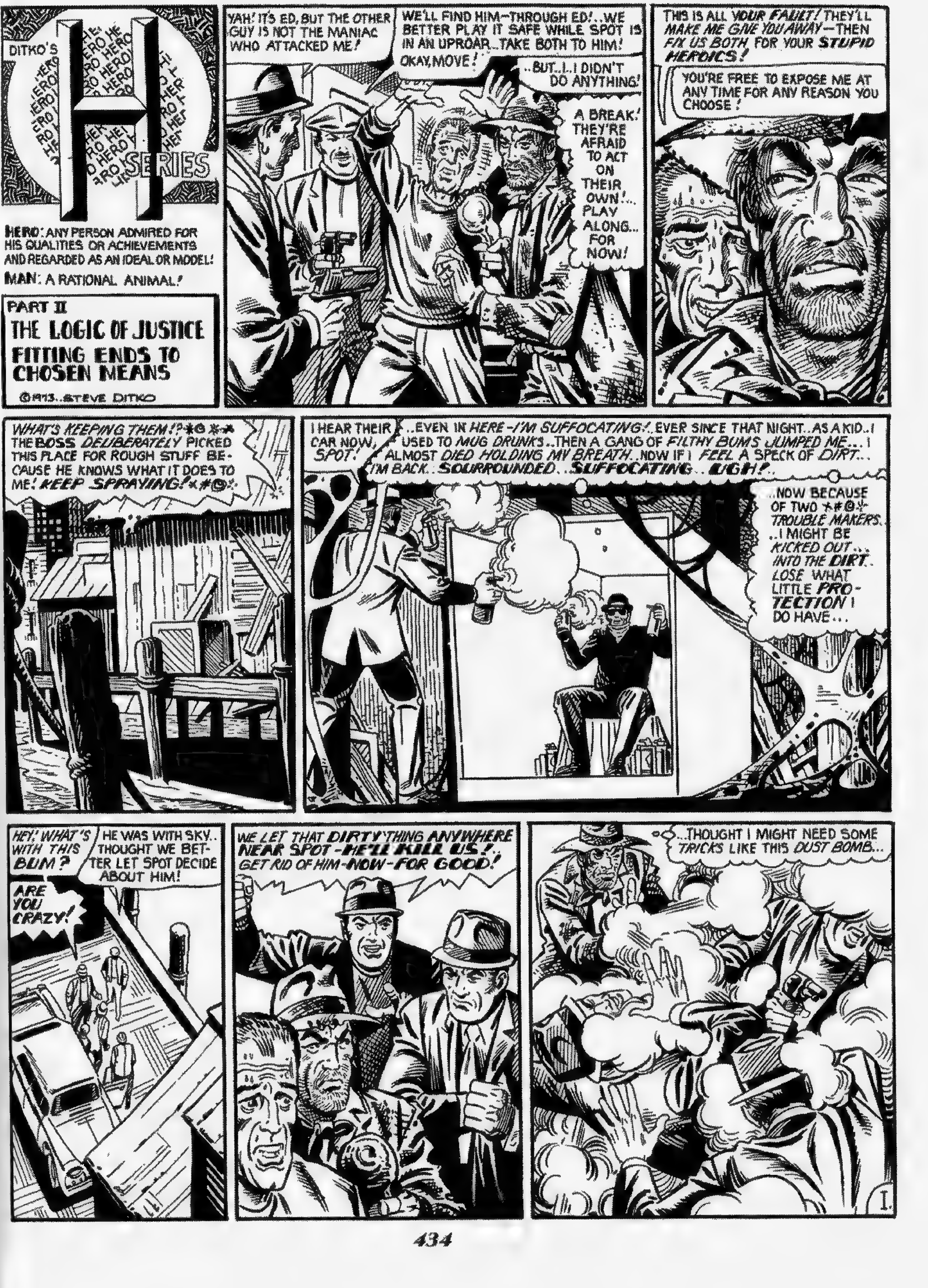
All characters pictured in this article are © 1973 by National Per. Pub.

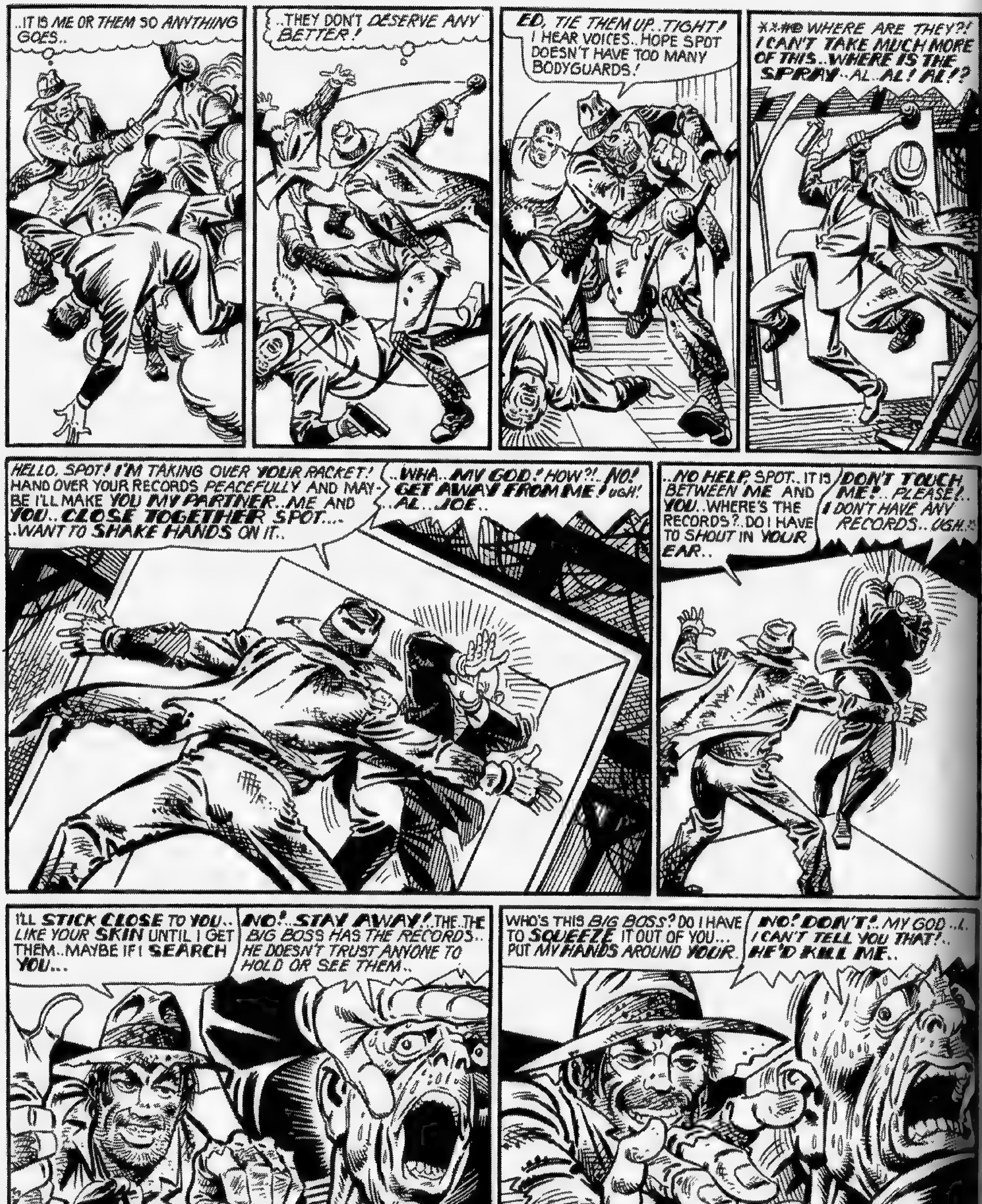
Art for this feature by: Kurt Schaffenberger, Martin L. Greim and Al Bradford.

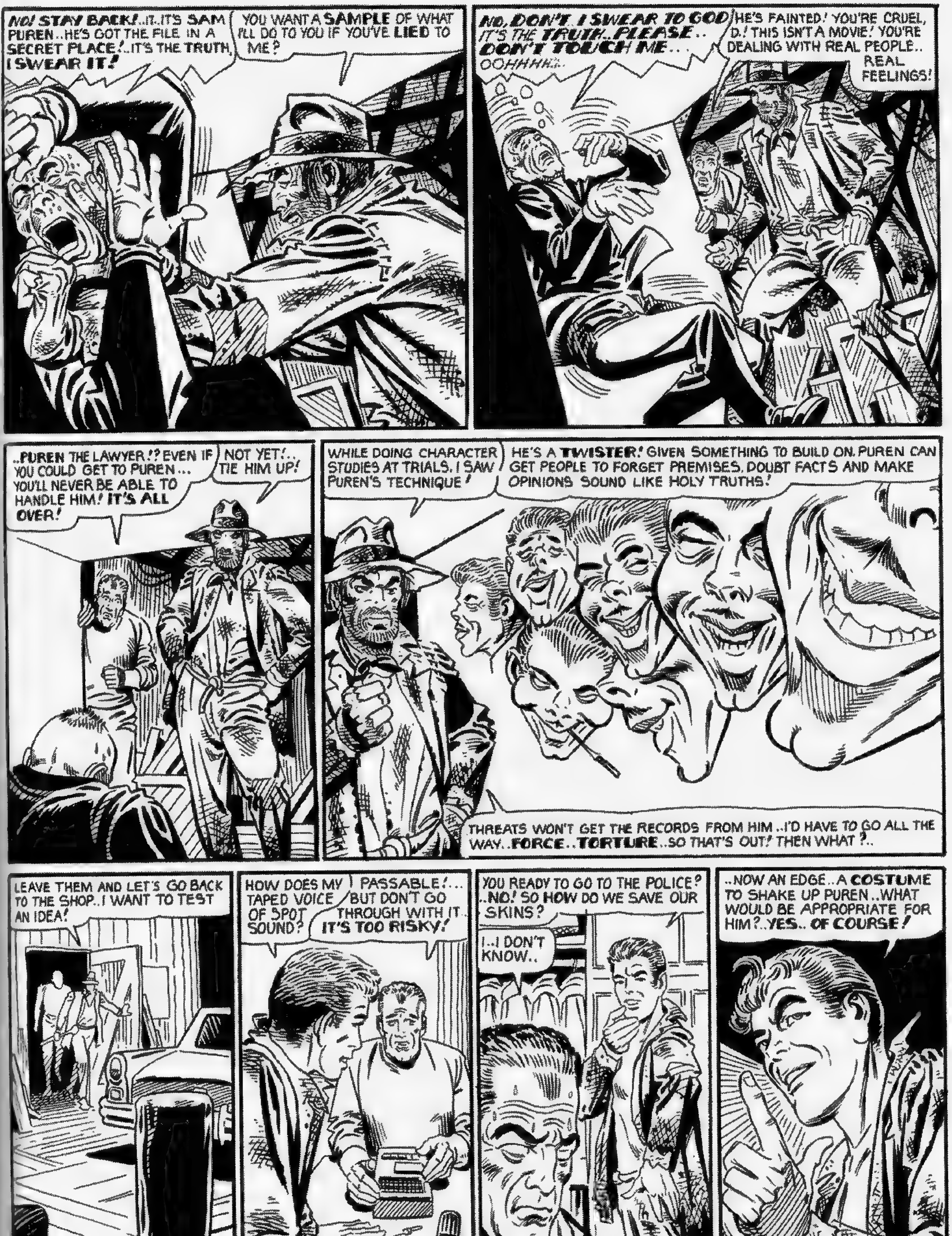
The World's Mightiest Mortals

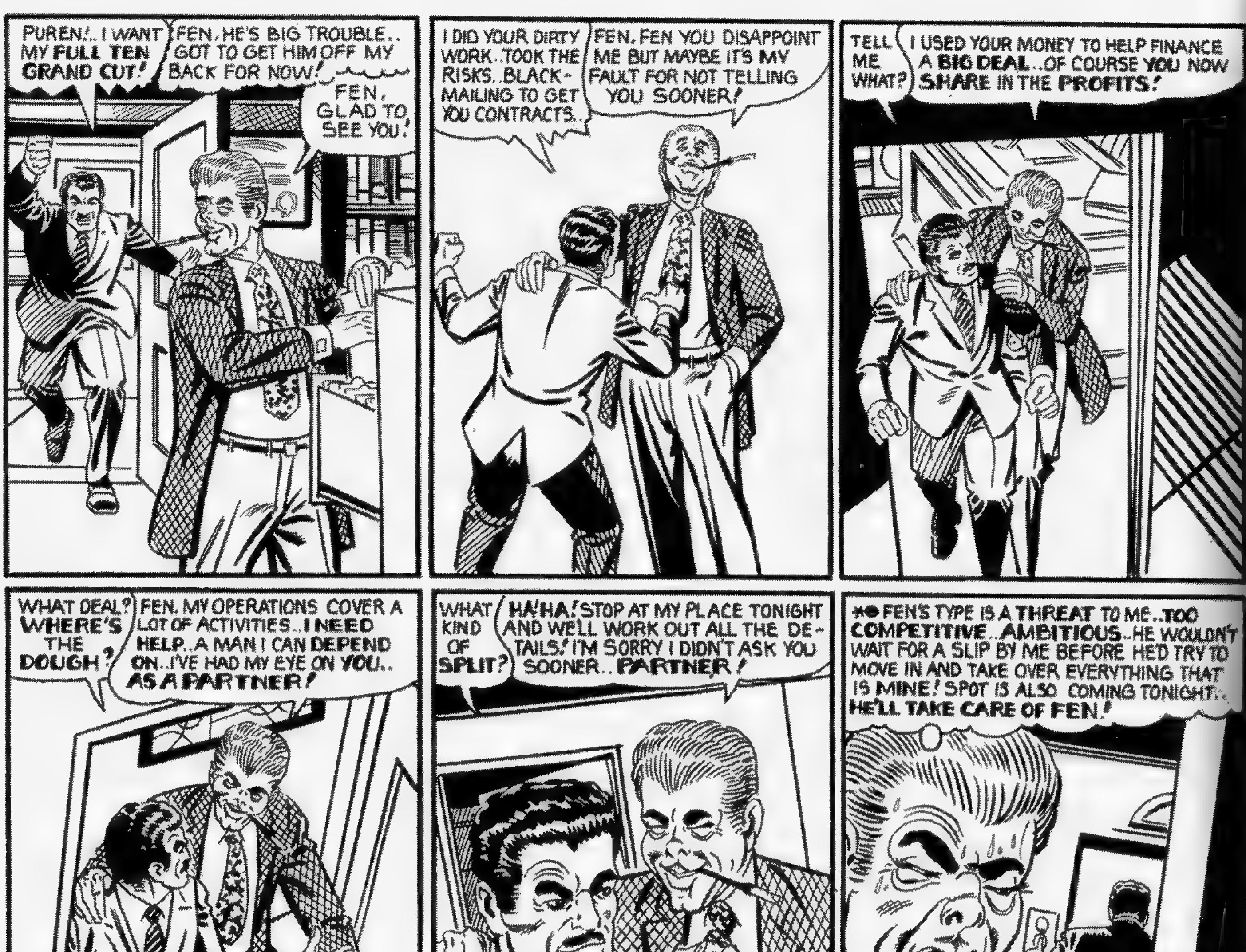
by MLG +ALBRADFORD

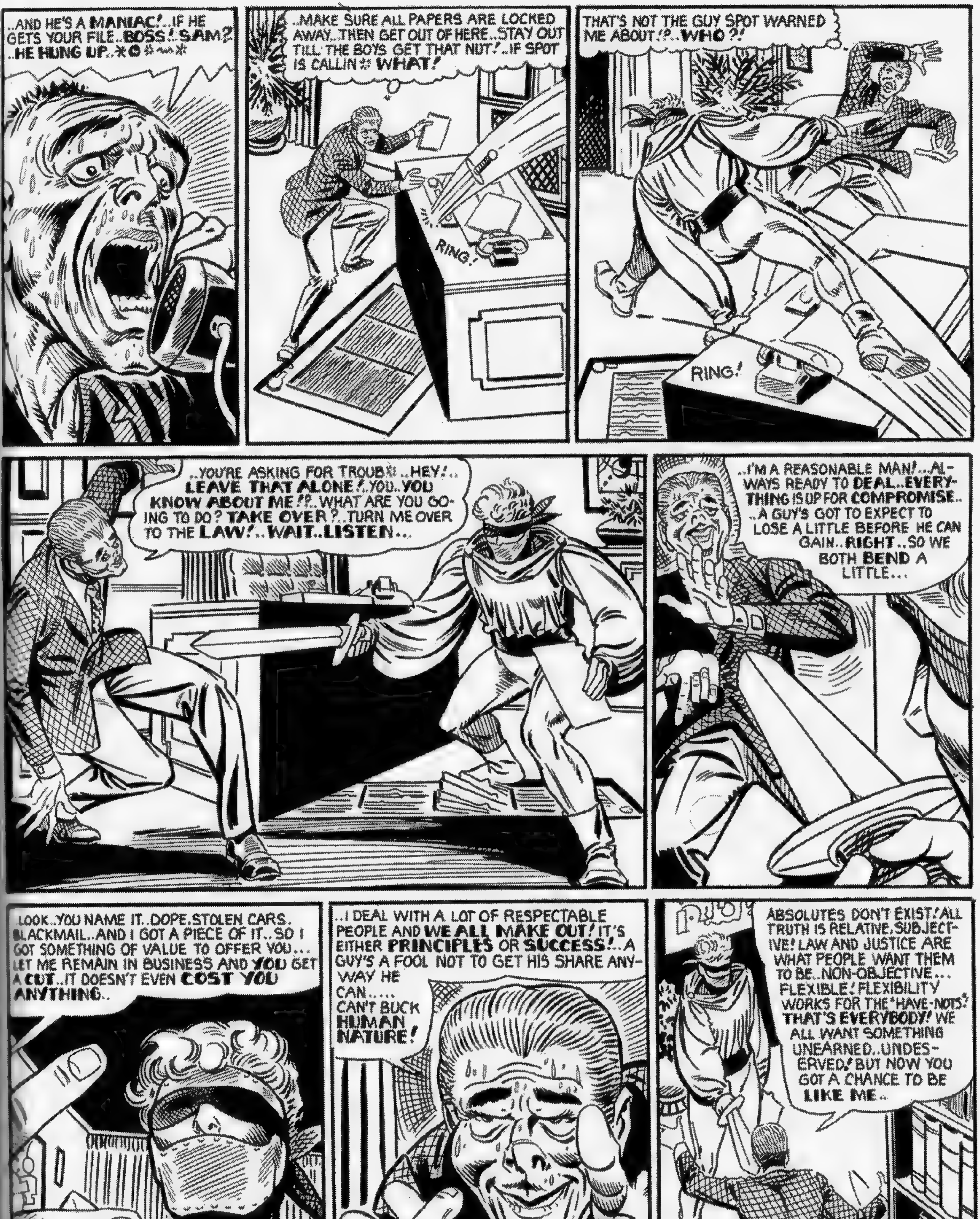

HOLY MOLEY! LOOK WHO'S BACK IN TOWN!

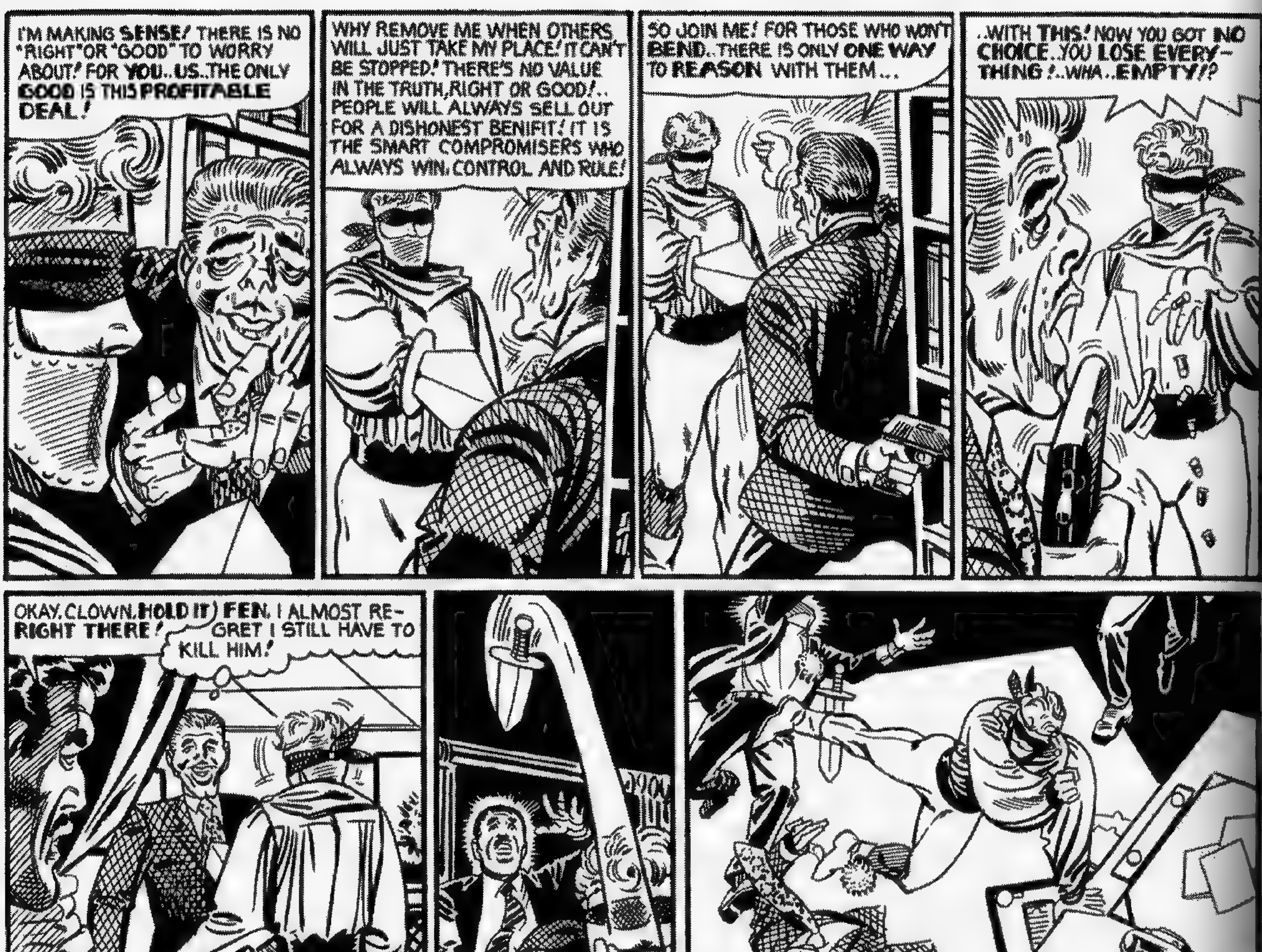

DITKO'S H SERIES
HERO: ANY PERSON ADMIRED FOR HIS QUALITIES OR ACHIEVEMENTS AND REGARDED AS AN IDEAL OR MODEL!
MAN: A RATIONAL ANIMAL!
PART II
THE LOGIC OF JUSTICE
FITTING ENDS TO CHOSEN MEANS
©1973..STEVE DITKO
YAH! IT'S ED, BUT THE OTHER GUY IS NOT THE MANIAC WHO ATTACKED ME!
WE'LL FIND HIM—THROUGH ED!..WE BETTER PLAY IT SAFE WHILE SPOT IS IN AN UPROAR..TAKE BOTH TO HIM!
OKAY, MOVE!
..BUT..I..I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
A BREAK! THEY'RE AFRAID TO ACT ON THEIR OWN!... PLAY ALONG... FOR NOW!
THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT! THEY'LL MAKE ME GIVE YOU AWAY—THEN FIX US BOTH FOR YOUR STUPID HEROICS!
YOU'RE FREE TO EXPOSE ME AT ANY TIME FOR ANY REASON YOU CHOOSE!
WHAT'S KEEPING THEM!?*@*·* THE BOSS DELIBERATELY PICKED THIS PLACE FOR ROUGH STUFF BECAUSE HE KNOWS WHAT IT DOES TO ME! KEEP SPRAYING!*#@*
I HEAR THEIR CAR NOW, SPOT!
..EVEN IN HERE—I'M SUFFOCATING!..EVER SINCE THAT NIGHT..AS A KID..I USED TO MUG DRUNKS..THEN A GANG OF FILTHY BUMS JUMPED ME...I ALMOST DIED HOLDING MY BREATH..NOW IF I FEEL A SPECK OF DIRT...I'M BACK..SOURROUNDED..SUFFOCATING..UGH!..
..NOW BECAUSE OF TWO *#@* TROUBLE MAKERS..I MIGHT BE KICKED OUT...INTO THE DIRT..LOSE WHAT LITTLE PROTECTION I DO HAVE...
HEY! WHAT'S WITH THIS BUM?
HE WAS WITH SKY..THOUGHT WE BETTER LET SPOT DECIDE ABOUT HIM!
ARE YOU CRAZY!
WE LET THAT DIRTY THING ANYWHERE NEAR SPOT—HE'LL KILL US!..GET RID OF HIM—NOW—FOR GOOD!
...THOUGHT I MIGHT NEED SOME TRICKS LIKE THIS DUST BOMB...
1.

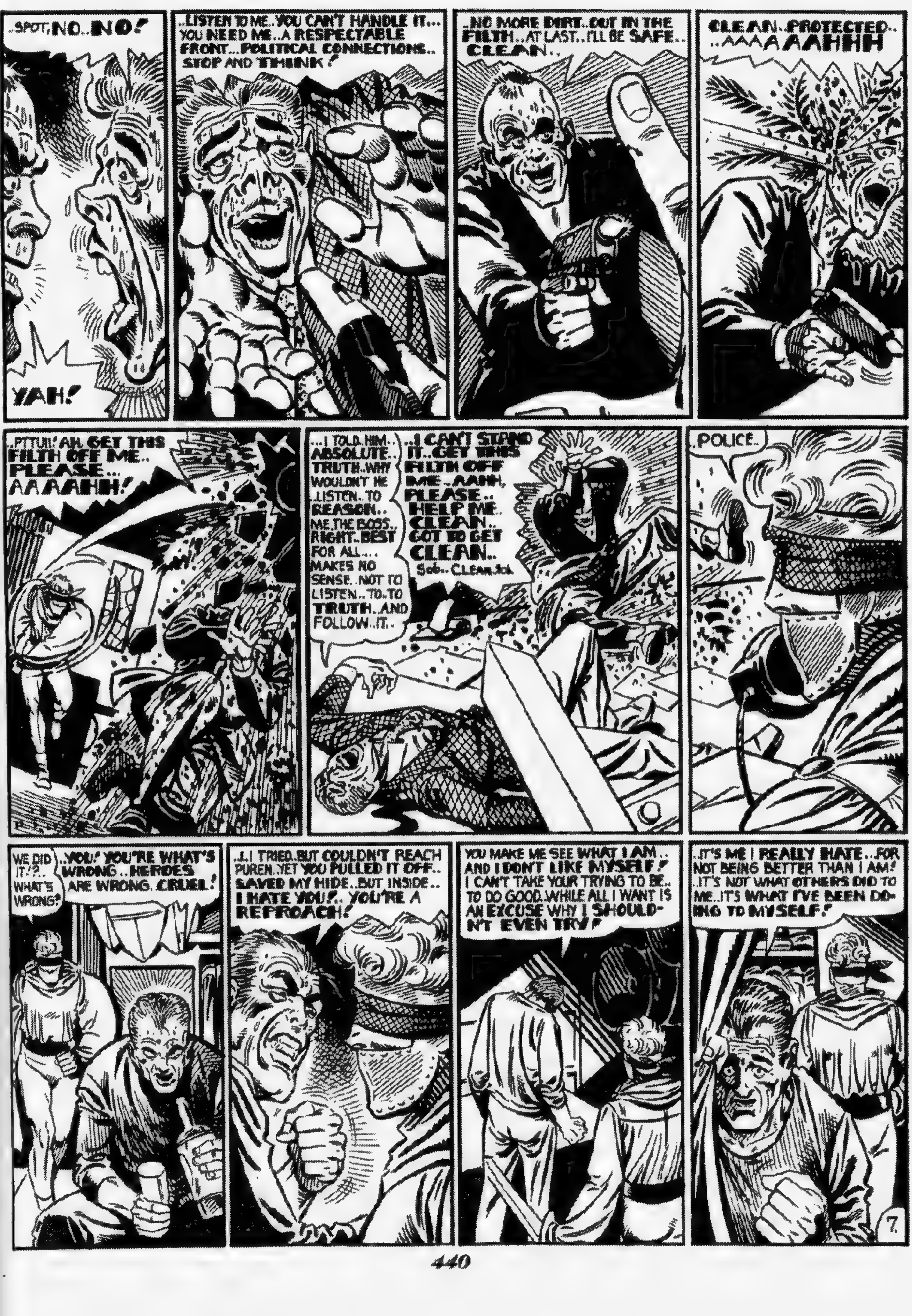

..IT IS ME OR THEM SO ANYTHING GOES..
..THEY DON'T DESERVE ANY BETTER!
ED, TIE THEM UP..TIGHT! I HEAR VOICES..HOPE SPOT DOESN'T HAVE TOO MANY BODYGUARDS!
*%#@ WHERE ARE THEY?! I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS..WHERE IS THE SPRAY..AL..AL! AL!?
HELLO, SPOT! I'M TAKING OVER YOUR RACKET! HAND OVER YOUR RECORDS PEACEFULLY AND MAYBE I'LL MAKE YOU MY PARTNER..ME AND YOU..CLOSE TOGETHER SPOT.... ..WANT TO SHAKE HANDS ON IT..
..WHA..MY GOD! HOW?!..NO! GET AWAY FROM ME! UGH! ..AL..JOE..
..NO HELP, SPOT..IT IS BETWEEN ME AND YOU..WHERE'S THE RECORDS?..DO I HAVE TO SHOUT IN YOUR EAR..
DON'T TOUCH ME!..PLEASE!.. I DON'T HAVE ANY RECORDS..UGH..
I'LL STICK CLOSE TO YOU.. LIKE YOUR SKIN UNTIL I GET THEM..MAYBE IF I SEARCH YOU...
NO!..STAY AWAY!..THE..THE BIG BOSS HAS THE RECORDS.. HE DOESN'T TRUST ANYONE TO HOLD OR SEE THEM..
WHO'S THIS BIG BOSS? DO I HAVE TO SQUEEZE IT OUT OF YOU... PUT MY HANDS AROUND YOUR.
NO! DON'T!..MY GOD..I.. I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT!.. HE'D KILL ME..
YOU'RE LYING!..GOT A COMBINATION.. KEY TAPED TO YOUR SKIN..I'LL FIND.
NO!
2

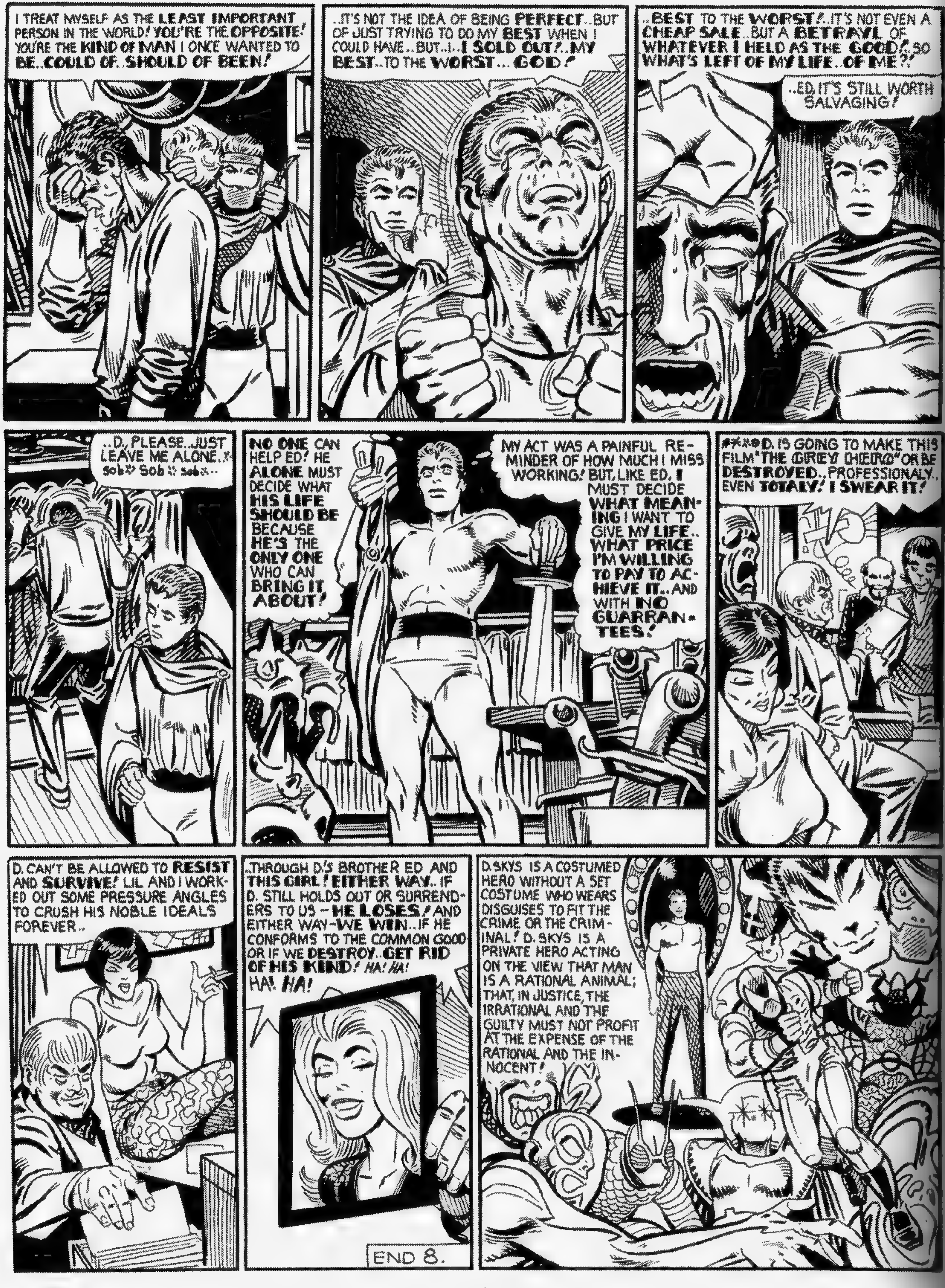

NO! STAY BACK!..IT..IT'S SAM PUREN..HE'S GOT THE FILE IN A SECRET PLACE!..IT'S THE TRUTH, I SWEAR IT!
YOU WANT A SAMPLE OF WHAT I'LL DO TO YOU IF YOU'VE LIED TO ME?
NO, DON'T. I SWEAR TO GOD IT'S THE TRUTH...PLEASE.. DON'T TOUCH ME... OOHHHH...
HE'S FAINTED! YOU'RE CRUEL, D.! THIS ISN'T A MOVIE! YOU'RE DEALING WITH REAL PEOPLE.. REAL FEELINGS!
..PUREN THE LAWYER!? EVEN IF YOU COULD GET TO PUREN... YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO HANDLE HIM! IT'S ALL OVER!
NOT YET!.. TIE HIM UP!
WHILE DOING CHARACTER STUDIES AT TRIALS, I SAW PUREN'S TECHNIQUE!
HE'S A TWISTER! GIVEN SOMETHING TO BUILD ON, PUREN CAN GET PEOPLE TO FORGET PREMISES, DOUBT FACTS AND MAKE OPINIONS SOUND LIKE HOLY TRUTHS!
THREATS WON'T GET THE RECORDS FROM HIM ..I'D HAVE TO GO ALL THE WAY..FORCE..TORTURE..SO THAT'S OUT! THEN WHAT?..
LEAVE THEM AND LET'S GO BACK TO THE SHOP..I WANT TO TEST AN IDEA!
HOW DOES MY TAPED VOICE OF SPOT SOUND?
PASSABLE!... BUT DON'T GO THROUGH WITH IT.. IT'S TOO RISKY!
YOU READY TO GO TO THE POLICE? ..NO! SO HOW DO WE SAVE OUR SKINS?
I..I DON'T KNOW..
..NOW AN EDGE..A COSTUME TO SHAKE UP PUREN..WHAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR HIM?..YES.. OF COURSE!
3


PUREN!.. I WANT MY FULL TEN GRAND CUT!
FEN, HE'S BIG TROUBLE.. GOT TO GET HIM OFF MY BACK FOR NOW!
FEN, GLAD TO SEE YOU!
I DID YOUR DIRTY WORK..TOOK THE RISKS..BLACKMAILING TO GET YOU CONTRACTS..
FEN, FEN YOU DISAPPOINT ME BUT MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT FOR NOT TELLING YOU SOONER!
TELL ME WHAT?
I USED YOUR MONEY TO HELP FINANCE A BIG DEAL..OF COURSE YOU NOW SHARE IN THE PROFITS!
WHAT DEAL? WHERE'S THE DOUGH?
FEN, MY OPERATIONS COVER A LOT OF ACTIVITIES..I NEED HELP..A MAN I CAN DEPEND ON..I'VE HAD MY EYE ON YOU.. AS A PARTNER!
WHAT KIND OF SPLIT?
HA'HA! STOP AT MY PLACE TONIGHT AND WE'LL WORK OUT ALL THE DETAILS! I'M SORRY I DIDN'T ASK YOU SOONER.. PARTNER!
FEN'S TYPE IS A THREAT TO ME..TOO COMPETITIVE..AMBITIOUS..HE WOULDN'T WAIT FOR A SLIP BY ME BEFORE HE'D TRY TO MOVE IN AND TAKE OVER EVERYTHING THAT IS MINE! SPOT IS ALSO COMING TONIGHT.. HE'LL TAKE CARE OF FEN!
I'M GOING! ..YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?
YAH! YAH!.. YOU GIVE THE WORD..I CALL PUREN.. AND PLAY THE TAPE!
..NOW, ED!
...O..OKAY, D!
WHAT'S TAKING ED SO LONG?.. AT LAST!
RING!
HELLO!..SPOT? WHAT!?
4.


..AND HE'S A MANIAC!..IF HE GETS YOUR FILE..BOSS!..SAM?..HE HUNG UP..*@#~~*
..MAKE SURE ALL PAPERS ARE LOCKED AWAY..THEN GET OUT OF HERE..STAY OUT TILL THE BOYS GET THAT NUT!..IF SPOT IS CALLIN'* WHAT!
RING!
THAT'S NOT THE GUY SPOT WARNED ME ABOUT!?..WHO?!
RING!
..YOU'RE ASKING FOR TROUB*..HEY!.. LEAVE THAT ALONE!..YOU..YOU KNOW ABOUT ME!?..WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? TAKE OVER?..TURN ME OVER TO THE LAW!..WAIT..LISTEN..
..I'M A REASONABLE MAN!...ALWAYS READY TO DEAL..EVERYTHING IS UP FOR COMPROMISE.. ..A GUY'S GOT TO EXPECT TO LOSE A LITTLE BEFORE HE CAN GAIN..RIGHT..SO WE BOTH BEND A LITTLE...
LOOK..YOU NAME IT..DOPE, STOLEN CARS, BLACKMAIL..AND I GOT A PIECE OF IT..SO I GOT SOMETHING OF VALUE TO OFFER YOU... LET ME REMAIN IN BUSINESS AND YOU GET A CUT..IT DOESN'T EVEN COST YOU ANYTHING..
..I DEAL WITH A LOT OF RESPECTABLE PEOPLE AND WE ALL MAKE OUT! IT'S EITHER PRINCIPLES OR SUCCESS!..A GUY'S A FOOL NOT TO GET HIS SHARE ANYWAY HE CAN..... CAN'T BUCK HUMAN NATURE!
ABSOLUTES DON'T EXIST! ALL TRUTH IS RELATIVE, SUBJECTIVE! LAW AND JUSTICE ARE WHAT PEOPLE WANT THEM TO BE..NON-OBJECTIVE... FLEXIBLE! FLEXIBILITY WORKS FOR THE "HAVE-NOTS"! THAT'S EVERYBODY! WE ALL WANT SOMETHING UNEARNED..UNDESERVED! BUT NOW YOU GOT A CHANCE TO BE LIKE ME..
5.


I'M MAKING SENSE! THERE IS NO "RIGHT" OR "GOOD" TO WORRY ABOUT! FOR YOU..US..THE ONLY GOOD IS THIS PROFITABLE DEAL!
WHY REMOVE ME WHEN OTHERS WILL JUST TAKE MY PLACE! IT CAN'T BE STOPPED! THERE'S NO VALUE IN THE TRUTH, RIGHT OR GOOD!.. PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS SELL OUT FOR A DISHONEST BENIFIT! IT IS THE SMART COMPROMISERS WHO ALWAYS WIN, CONTROL AND RULE!
SO JOIN ME! FOR THOSE WHO WON'T BEND..THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO REASON WITH THEM...
..WITH THIS! NOW YOU GOT NO CHOICE..YOU LOSE EVERY-THING!..WHA..EMPTY!?
OKAY, CLOWN, HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
FEN, I ALMOST RE-GRET I STILL HAVE TO KILL HIM!
..SPOT! GOD AM I GLAD TO SEE YO... WHAT..WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?
..THE RECORDS!.. CONTROL OF THE RACKETS...FOR THE TAKING!
..SPOT!... WHAT ARE YOU THINK.. SPOT!?
SAFE..PROTECTED.. NO MORE DIRT... ..CLEAN..
NO!
6.

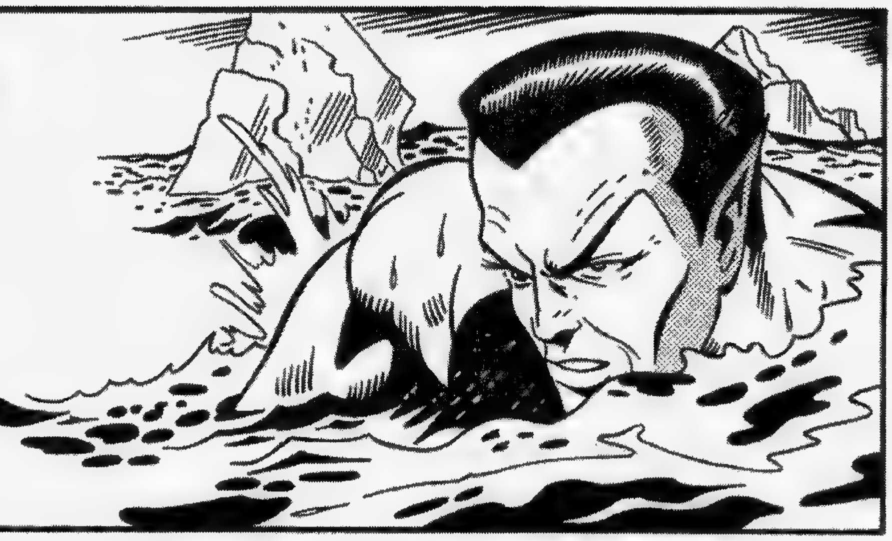

..SPOT, NO.. NO!
YAH!
..LISTEN TO ME.. YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT... YOU NEED ME.. A RESPECTABLE FRONT... POLITICAL CONNECTIONS.. STOP AND THINK!
..NO MORE DIRT.. OUT IN THE FILTH.. AT LAST.. I'LL BE SAFE.. CLEAN..
CLEAN.. PROTECTED.. ..AAAAAAHHH
..PTTUI! AH, GET THIS FILTH OFF ME.. PLEASE... AAAAHH!
...I TOLD HIM.. ABSOLUTE.. TRUTH..WHY WOULDN'T HE ..LISTEN.. TO REASON.. ME, THE BOSS.. RIGHT.. BEST FOR ALL.... MAKES NO SENSE.. NOT TO LISTEN.. TO.TO TRUTH.. AND FOLLOW..IT..
..I CAN'T STAND IT.. GET THIS FILTH OFF ME.. AAHH, PLEASE.. HELP ME.. CLEAN.. GOT TO GET CLEAN.. Sob.. CLEAN..ick
..POLICE..
WE DID IT!?.. WHAT'S WRONG?
..YOU! YOU'RE WHAT'S WRONG.. HEROES ARE WRONG, CRUEL!
..I..I TRIED..BUT COULDN'T REACH PUREN..YET YOU PULLED IT OFF.. SAVED MY HIDE..BUT INSIDE.. I HATE YOU!.. YOU'RE A REPROACH!
YOU MAKE ME SEE WHAT I AM.. AND I DON'T LIKE MYSELF! I CAN'T TAKE YOUR TRYING TO BE.. TO DO GOOD, WHILE ALL I WANT IS AN EXCUSE WHY I SHOULDN'T EVEN TRY!
..IT'S ME I REALLY HATE.. FOR NOT BEING BETTER THAN I AM! ..IT'S NOT WHAT OTHERS DID TO ME.. IT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING TO MYSELF!
7.


I TREAT MYSELF AS THE LEAST IMPORTANT PERSON IN THE WORLD! YOU'RE THE OPPOSITE! YOU'RE THE KIND OF MAN I ONCE WANTED TO BE..COULD OF..SHOULD OF BEEN!
..IT'S NOT THE IDEA OF BEING PERFECT..BUT OF JUST TRYING TO DO MY BEST WHEN I COULD HAVE...BUT..I..I SOLD OUT!..MY BEST..TO THE WORST...GOD!
..BEST TO THE WORST!..IT'S NOT EVEN A CHEAP SALE..BUT A BETRAYL OF WHATEVER I HELD AS THE GOOD!..SO WHAT'S LEFT OF MY LIFE..OF ME?!
..ED, IT'S STILL WORTH SALVAGING!
..D, PLEASE..JUST LEAVE ME ALONE..* Sob* Sob* sob*..
NO ONE CAN HELP ED! HE ALONE MUST DECIDE WHAT HIS LIFE SHOULD BE BECAUSE HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BRING IT ABOUT!
MY ACT WAS A PAINFUL REMINDER OF HOW MUCH I MISS WORKING! BUT, LIKE ED, I MUST DECIDE WHAT MEANING I WANT TO GIVE MY LIFE.. WHAT PRICE I'M WILLING TO PAY TO ACHIEVE IT..AND WITH NO GUARRANTEES!
#*×@D. IS GOING TO MAKE THIS FILM "THE GREY HERO" OR BE DESTROYED..PROFESSIONALY.. EVEN TOTALY! I SWEAR IT!
D. CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO RESIST AND SURVIVE! LIL AND I WORKED OUT SOME PRESSURE ANGLES TO CRUSH HIS NOBLE IDEALS FOREVER..
..THROUGH D.'S BROTHER ED AND THIS GIRL! EITHER WAY.. IF D. STILL HOLDS OUT OR SURRENDERS TO US – HE LOSES! AND EITHER WAY–WE WIN..IF HE CONFORMS TO THE COMMON GOOD OR IF WE DESTROY..GET RID OF HIS KIND! HA! HA! HA! HA!
END 8.
D. SKYS IS A COSTUMED HERO WITHOUT A SET COSTUME WHO WEARS DISGUISES TO FIT THE CRIME OR THE CRIMINAL! D. SKYS IS A PRIVATE HERO ACTING ON THE VIEW THAT MAN IS A RATIONAL ANIMAL; THAT, IN JUSTICE, THE IRRATIONAL AND THE GUILTY MUST NOT PROFIT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE RATIONAL AND THE INNOCENT!

TALE OF AN ANCIENT MARINER

by

Martin L. Greim



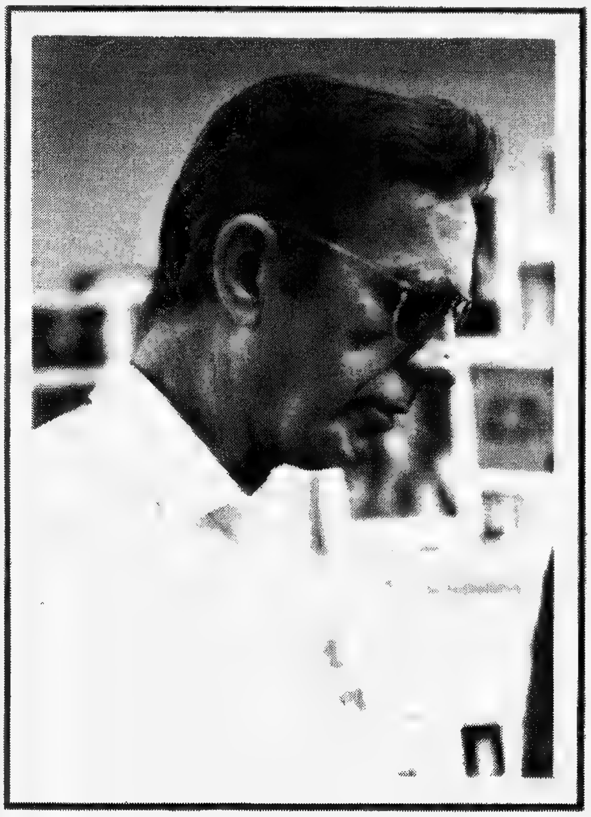
> "The Sun came up upon the left,
> Out of the Sea came he;
> And he shone bright and on the right
> Went down into the sea."

It was this 11th stanza of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" that inspired one William Blake Everett to create the famed Sub-Mariner back in 1939.

Although Bill worked on and created many characters during his lifetime, it is still his "Water World" characters that he will be best remembered for. Come with me now, as we examine those characters and the life of a comic book artist, writer and colorist... BILL EVERETT!

Born May 18, 1917 in Newton, Massachusetts; Bill and his family soon moved to a ranch in Arizona, where he stayed until his mid-teens. He had been led into cartooning by his father, but his father passed away before the realization of that dream came true. Bill returned to the East and enrolled in the Vesper George School of Art, where he stayed for the 1934-35 term. Bill spoke thusly about his education:

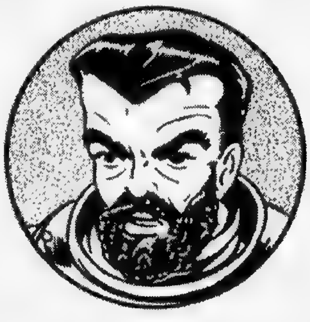
"I only have two years of art training and I really don't even have that! I was credited with three years of training because I went through three years in about a year and a half. This was due to inborn talent and the drive to get somewhere fast! I dropped out of both high school and art school and had to make up for this in reading."



Bill's first job was with The Boston Herald-Traveler's retail advertising art staff. He later worked for The Brooks System (civil engineers in Newton, Mass.), The New York Herald Tribune, art editor for Radio News Magazine, Teck Publications, Inc. (Teck later became Ziff-Davis), and art director for Herm Bollin. A combination of Bill's cockyness and the fact he didn't get along very well with Herm, led to his being fired. It was at this point Bill Everett happened into comics! Walter Holze, a former co-worker of his at Teck, told him of a new type of book being produced. It was a comic book! The following week Bill was working for John Harley at Centaur Comics doing "Skyrocket Steele."

From that begining, came a long and distinguished career with many companies and creations. Here is a list of the full color comic books and their characters:

(Centaur) Skyrocket Steele, Dirk the Demon, A-Man;
(Marvel) The Sub-Mariner, The Fin, The Patriot, Venus, Namora, Marvel Boy, Daredevil, The Hulk, Dr. Strange, and many of the Marvel horror stories. He also inked the following books at Marvel...Capt. America, Ka-Zar, Gullivar Jones, Rawhide Kid, Black Widow, and a Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. story.
(Novelty) The Chameleon, Sub-Zero, White Streak, Bull's-Eye Bill;
(Eastern Color) Hydroman, Music Master;
(Hillman) The Conqueror.
Bill also worked for pre-war Quality and post-war Orbit.

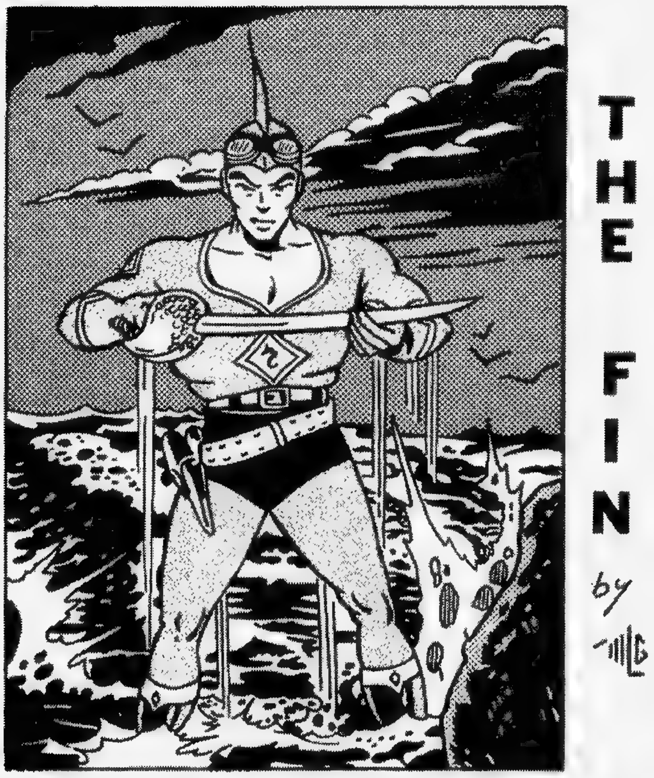


Commander LEONARD McKENZIE

> "Water, Water, every where,
> And all the boards did shrink;
> Water, water, every where
> Nor any drop to drink."

The last two lines of Coleridge's rime are surely the most often quoted, as well as the most often misquoted. It is these lines that lead us into Everett's first Water World creation...THE SUB-MARINER!

"In 1939, a few of us banded together forming our own informal art service. Carl Burgos, Paul Gustafson, Ben Thompson and a few others offered a package deal to the publishers. We would write the story and do the complete artwork, as part of a 32-page or 48-page book. We started out very small, but rapidly built.



This outfit was called Funnies Inc. One of our very first customers was Martin Goodman, who founded what was then called Timely Comics."

It was at this point Everett created The Sub-Mariner. While holding an informal story conference at the Webster Bar with Carl Burgos, creator of The Human Torch, they decided to use the two elements, fire and water, for some characters. Everett had been reading Jack London and deep-sea novels by James Conelly. This coupled with "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" gave Bill the idea for the Sub-Mariner.

THE SUB-MARINER

Marvel Mystery Comics #1, 1939, told of an American Naval expedition to the Antarctic, led by Commander Leonard McKenzie. The expedition was unwittingly wreaking havoc upon an undersea kingdom, by dynamiting icebergs on the surface. The Emperor of this kingdom sent his daughter, Princess Fen, to spy on McKenzie; but instead she fell in love with him. Shortly, the undersea kingdom prepared to attack. Once again, McKenzie blasted away at the ice and the army was destroyed. Angered at what he had done, Princess Fen jumped overboard and returned to her people, where later Prince Namor, The Sub-Mariner, was born.

Almost every comic reader knows that origin story, but how many are aware that Commander McKenzie didn't return to America with his original expedition? Sub-Mariner #32, June, 1949, carried this origin one step further. (This was the last issue before Sub-Mariner faded into limbo for a time.) Everett depicted McKenzie, frantic to find his bride, leaving his ship to search for her upon the ice pack. McKenzie disappeared and the crew of his ship searched day and night for him. They were forced to give up this search, to avoid the ice that was entrapping their ship. Anchor is weighed and a prayer is offered from the ship, that if McKenzie is still alive, his end comes quickly. McKenzie is alive and has suffered a broken leg. Princess Fen, who had been watching the departure of his ship, discovers the trapped McKenzie. She has two soldiers carry him to her kingdom's surface city within an iceberg. His leg is treated; but that night, as he sleeps, two of the kingdom's war secretaries try to kill him. Fen, who had been standing guard, blasts them with an ice-ray gun and saves him. Angered, she confronts the high council and tells them she has strategic reasons for keeping the hated surface man alive, and that in The Emperor's absence she demands that her wishes be respected. As Fen leaves the council chamber, it buzzes with excitement. "Her marriage isn't legal - it was performed by their laws, not ours!" "It was just part of our spy plan...The Emperor won't like this!"

Fen tells McKenzie he is in great danger. McKenzie replies, "You can't let them kill me! You-you love me, don't you Princess? Don't you???" Fen hesitates, remembering all her people that were killed by the explosions..."Love you? I...I don't know, Leonard... We...We'd better talk about it some other time..." That later time does come, as Fen realizes she is truly in love with Leonard McKenzie. A few days later, despite protests, they are married by the High Priest. Several days go by, when, without warning, The Emperor arrives! He summons Princess Fen to face his wrath! Fen begs for mercy, saying that McKenzie is innocent of any wrong doing. At this point, McKenzie enters the hall and is accused of being a mass-murderer. He tries to explain that the scientific expedition had no knowledge of the cities under the ice and that the explosives were necessary to blast their way through the ice-jams. The Emperor screams, "Lies! Nothing but lies!" and is about to have McKenzie executed when a thunderous blast shakes the palace. Six fathoms beneath the ice pack, chaos reigns. Another expedition has come to the Antarctic!

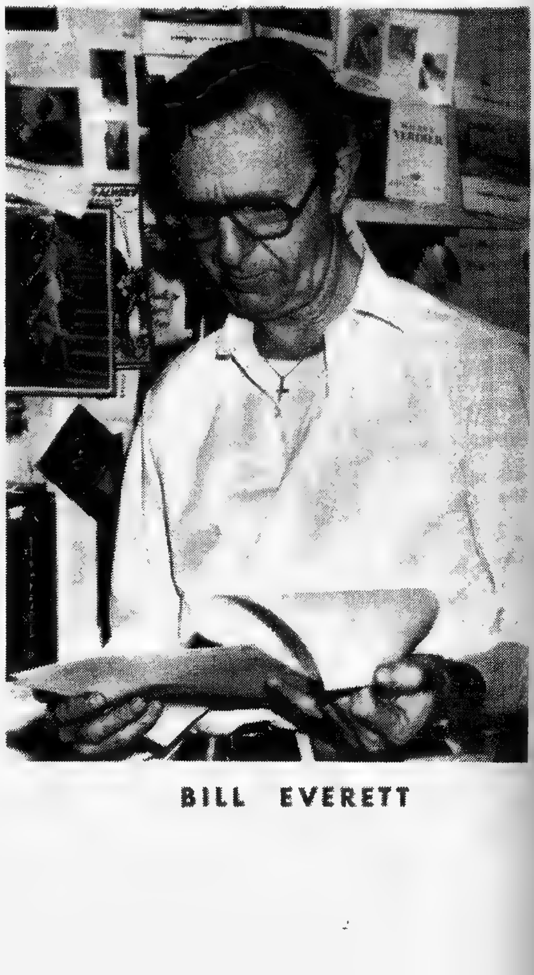
While The Emperor is distracted, Princess Fen leads McKenzie to the safety of the American ship. When she returns to face her father, The Emperor condems her to be imprisoned for the rest of her life! Months go by, when news reaches The Emperor that Princess Fen has borne a son! At first The Emperor believes this to be a catastrophe and wants to send Fen and her son to join McKenzie. However, when he realizes the baby is his only heir, he pardons Princess Fen, with the condition she must keep the baby in exile for ten years, then he is to be brought before him. Exactly ten years later, Princess Fen presents her son to his grandfather. The Emperor is pleased and states, "From this day forth, you will be known as Prince Namor, The Sub-Mariner!"

When Namor reached maturity, he encountered two divers from another expedition. Thinking they were some kind of robots, he attacked and destroyed them. This was Namor's first encounter with the "surface people." When he returned to the Palace to report this encounter, he was told it was time for him to go to America and avenge the destruction done to his race. Thus began the adventures of The Sub-Mariner.

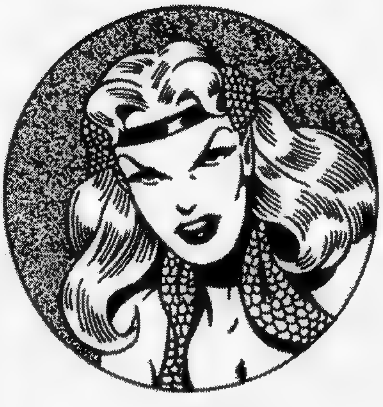
> "And some in dreams assured were
> Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
> Nine fathom deep he had followed us
> From the land of mist and snow."

There were women in The Sub-Mariner's life...Dorma, who was first introduced as a cousin and later as a star crossed lover. However, she is not so connected with Everett, as are the next three I'm going to mention.

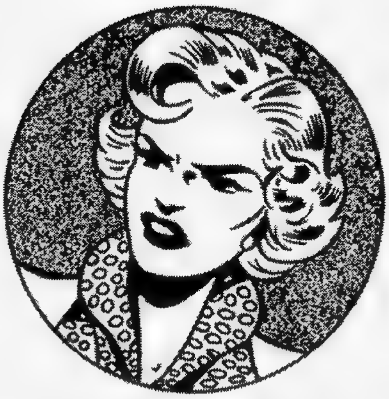
BETTY DEAN...The one surface being Namor cared anything



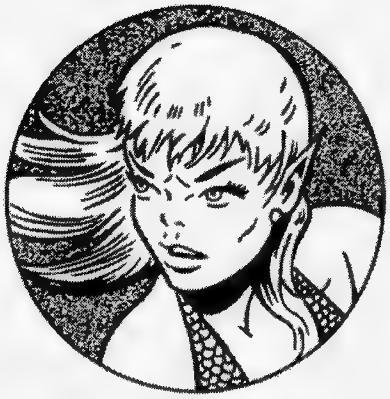
BILL EVERETT



NAMORA



BETTY DEAN



NAMORITA

about. He first encountered her when he was on a rampage in New York. (Marvel Mystery #3, Jan. 1940.) She was a policewoman assigned to capture him. She never succeeded physically, but did so emotionly! Betty proved to be a very enduring woman. She was with Namor in the 40's, and was with him again in his return during the 50's. She made perhaps her most dramatic return in 1968, in an Everett inspired story written by Roy Thomas titled "In the Rage of Battle!" (Sub-Mariner #8, Dec. 1968.) During a tremendous battle with The Thing, The Sub-Mariner is halted by an aged woman. We find she is a widow named Mrs. Prentiss, who, before she was married, was known as Betty Dean!

NAMORA...Or Aquaria Nautica Neptunia, as was her real name, began her career in Marvel Mystery Comics #82. Although she wasn't created by Everett, she has been so connected with Everett drawn Sub-Mariner's, over the years, that his is the accepted version. She joined Namor, as the sole survivor of an undersea massacre that destroyed many of The Sub-Mariner's people. A criminal by the name of "Stoop" Richards led his men, in diving gear, into Namora's city; plundered all its wealth and killed all its people. Namor found Namora wounded and soon after they teamed up to bring the criminals to justice. In the #39, April, 1955 issue of Sub-Mariner, another version of Namora is told. An Everett version tells of how she meets Namor, when he is a boy of 15 and we find that her father named her after Namor and that she is his cousin. Namora gives a cocky Namor a lesson in humility, when she saves him from entrapment in a wrecked submarine's torpedo tube. Namora was so popular in the 40's that she even had 3 issues of her own magazine. She didn't return in the 60's. However, when Everett once again took over the art and scripting on the Sub-Mariner in the 50th issue (June, 1972.); Namora was to play an important part in the introduction of our next character.

NAMORITA...Daughter of Namora. As Namor himself put it, "She has the sting of a butterfly, but the courage of a barracouda!" This was an apt discription of her character. A hybrid, like Namor, she could fly through the air with ease. This was a feat her mother was never able to accomplish. It was never told who Namora had married; but whoever it was, it must have been a surface man. For how else would she be able to perform feats like Namor's? In Sub-Mariner #51, we find the details of Namora's demise that had been reported in issue #50. It seems she was poisoned by the same woman who had killed Namor's love, Lady Dorma...LYYRA, Empress of Lemura! Namor finished her off by knocking her into a pool of oil.

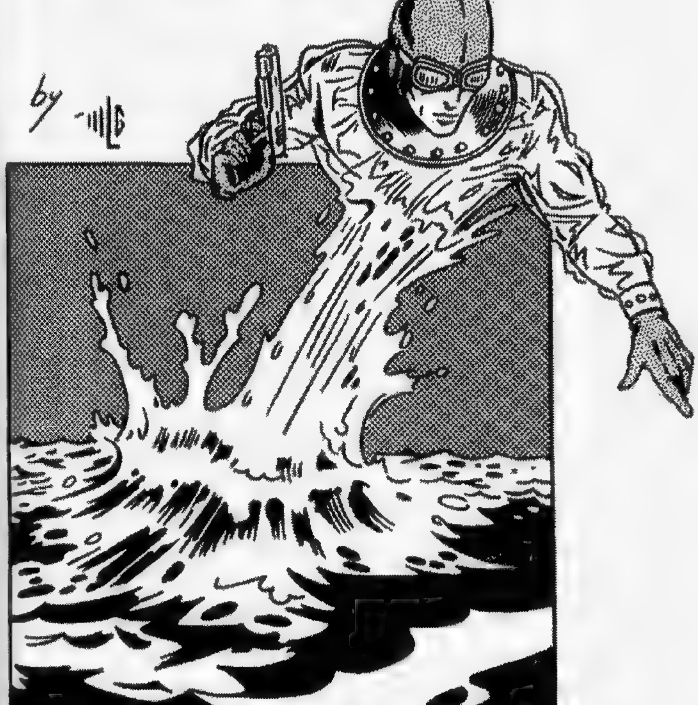
In Everett's creation of Nita, he combined the same spirit present in Namor, with one of the sexiest adolescent bodies ever presented in comics. He also gave her a touch of humor...both in actions and in facial expressions. She remains as one of my favorite Everett creations!

In 1954, The Sub-Mariner re-appeared after an absence of four years, and Everett's art was at its peak. It was at this time, the glory seeking stepson of The Emperor made his appearance.

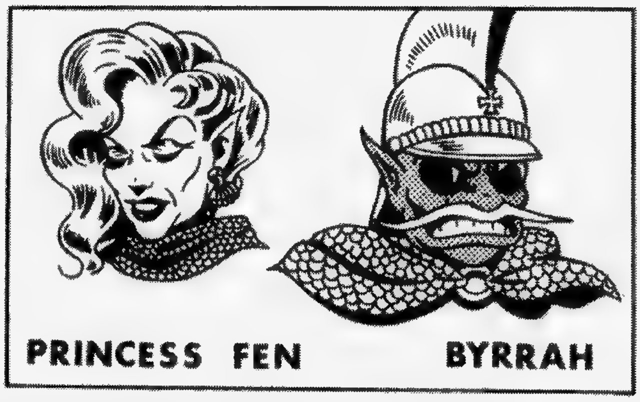
PRINCE BYRRAH...He and Namor were at constant odds! In Sub-Mariner #35 (1954) Byrrah tricked The Emperor into going to war with a small military-governed country in the South Atlantic. He thought that by leading an army and conquering this country, he would gain favor in The Emperor's eyes. Namor turned the tables on Byrrah and made him look like a fool. In turn Byrrah blamed Namor for his military defeat and had him banished from the kingdom. And so it went...Namor winning out against Byrrah, The Emperor's step-son, every time; but never quite completely!

The Sub-Mariner had become such a success, that in mid-1940, Steve Douglas, editor of Eastern Color's Famous Funnies, asked Bill to create a water hero for him.

HYDROMAN



HYDROMAN...was the result! Hydroman appeared in issues #1 thru #15 of Reg'lar Fellers Heroic Comics (1940-42) and in Heroic #16 thru #29 (1943-45). Everett did the art on the strip in '40 and '41. In Hydroman's first appearance, Harry Thurston, a young chemical engineer, compounded a formula to convert human flesh and blood into water. A huge container of the remarkable solution was spilled and splashed over Bob Blake, Harry's friend. This caused Bob to disintegrate and become a pool of water on the laboratory floor! Promptly an antidote was concocted, and with the aid of this, Bob regained his natural form. Bob then discovered that he could control this phenomenal change, merely by power of thought. When Everett created Hydroman's alter ego, he used the first name of his brother and his own middle name. In Hydroman's second appearance, Harry Thurston created a uniform for him made out of



Translite. It was transparent and so tough that nothing could penetrate it...not even bullets. Everett handled Hydroman in a more humorous manner than he had done on The Sub-Mariner. Hydroman appeared out of water-taps, fire hydrants, glasses of water and even traveled through sewers.

The last of Everett's Water World heroes only appeared three times. However, he's one of the most interesting, due to a weapon he acquired in his last adventure. Appearing in Daring Mystery #7 & #8, and again in Comedy #9...it's THE FIN!

U.S. Naval Cadet, Lt. Peter Noble was the sole survivor of a submarine wreck. He found, as he escaped from the doomed sub, that by some strange whim of fate he was endowed with the faculty of living under water as well as on land. Peter found himself in an underseas cavern, dominated by green sea creatures. He was soon locked in mortal combat with their leader. He overcame him and became the sea creature's leader. He then added a costume and a sharks fin headpiece to become...The Fin. In his last adventure, in Comedy, he discovered a cutlass in a sunken ship. He found that this cutlass could cut through any metal and that it gave him the strength of twenty men. The sword had another strange property. Because a wave of extreme disgust would come over anyone but himself that held the sword, Peter was its sole owner. I've never heard of any other comic book hero having a similar weapon.

In 1942, Everett joined the army. It was here he met Gwenn Randall, a girl working for the Pentagon's Ordinance Dept., and married her. In February of 1946 Everett was discharged from the service. He eventually renewed his association with Martin Goodman and began working on The Sub-Mariner again, as well as the Venus and Namora books. When the Golden Age of Comics was on the wane, Bill turned his attention to drawing horror stories. He also worked on humor magazines like Loco, Snafu and Cracked, where he was a staff artist in the early 60's, not to mention a "Little Annie Fanny" type magazine called Pussycat. Bill began working in the greeting card field and became Planning Director at Norcross and later on, art director at Rust-Craft Greeting Cards in Dedham, Mass., as well as art supervisor for Eaton Paper. When the super heroes were on the rise again, in the 1960's, Bill once again took pen in hand to work in the comic book media.

In 1967, I wanted to do a feature on my boyhood hero, Bill Everett, for Bob Cosgrove's fanzine Champion. I managed to get into contact with Bill and it began a long line of correspondence between us. Always creative. Bill's first letter to me contained a humorous autobiography, which I'm reprinting portions of here for your enjoyment.

"I think I was born about 500 years ago, under the Ross Sea Shelf in the Antarctic, and I started drawing pictures the day they came out with the ball-point-pen that would write under water. I was about 3 at the time and up until then I'd been drawing with an icicle. This didn't work out too well, though, because I had to use snow for ink, and I didn't have any shoe-polish to dye it with. Besides, I had to draw on slabs of ice.

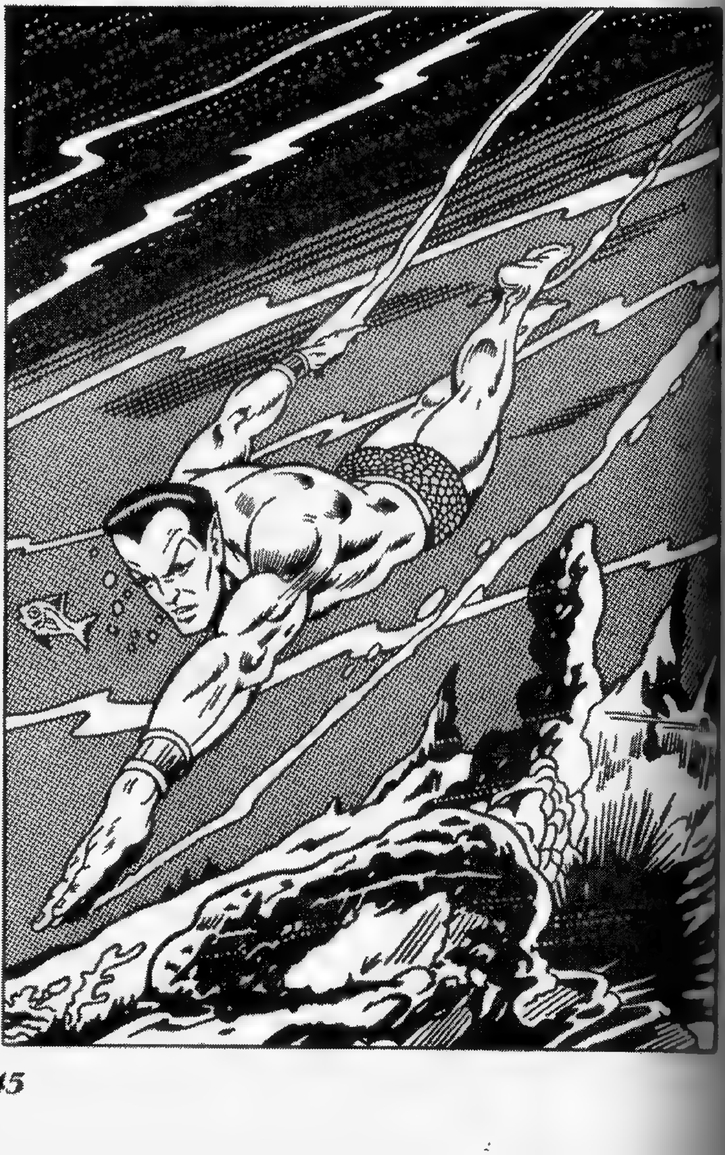
So I gave it all up for a couple of years and concentrated on learning how to swim. This helped a lot when a guy named Commander McKenzie came along and decided to blast out a few channels in the ice shelf. Somebody down there didn't like him, and there was a stupid war, or something. Being a baby myself, only a few hundred years old at the time, I don't remember much about it. There was this doll, however, a chick that called herself Princess Fen, who fell in love with this here Navy Commander and marries him, and they have some sort of kook kid they call The Sub-Mareener (or Mariner), and he grows up mad at the world, and all that jazz, and the first thing you know, I'm drawing pictures of him. I don't know why, really. He wasn't all that good looking.

Anyway, having been weaned on water, I got on this wet kick, and here was this guy called himself "The Fin" (because he wore one on his head - of all places!) who wanted me to draw pictures of him too; and another jerk named "Hydroman", who kept dripping out of kitchen faucets and spurting out of fire-hydrants, and there I was, sitting on the bottom of a gold-fish bowl, trying to keep a publisher happy with a wet piece of paper. Along the line I got married and have a daughter and two sons. Things had been sort of up and down with Namor, until dear old "Smilin' Stan" decided to create a new SM image. He got the idea when he decided to change Namor's enviroment to some place in limbo called "Atlantis" (I've been there and I can guarantee that it doesn't exist). Guy named Plato wrote a great story about it, but I can't remember he ever mentioned Namor. Thanks again for your interest. With a burble, and a gurgle and a whole bunch of bubbles - Yours from the coral reef...BILL EVERETT"

Toward the end of his career, bad fortune plagued Bill. A fall from a bus crippled him for many months. Then on February 27, 1973, Bill Everett passed away following a series of heart attacks. Comic readers everywhere lost a great talent...and I lost a friend. I only wish it were in my power to create a more fitting memorial! -mlg

"The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door."

The SUB-MARINER by -mlg



From the Circular File

WILLIAM J. FOX JR.
511 Arthur Ave.
Scottdale, Pa. 15683

Another great issue, this one on magic, even. Of course. I'm refering to C.C. #14. Ray Miller came through with another great article. The research alone was staggering. But what makes your writers stand apart from the average is their ability to write in a readable style. In Tom Fagan's case it's not only readable, but innovative. Believe me, this is extremely important. Being a high school English teacher I have the chance to see many that are almost unreadable. I greatly enjoyed your Fredericks interview. We don't seem to get as much information about strip artists as we should. I also enjoyed the personal touches on his family, hobbies, etc.

The art almost surpassed the text. It's really fantastic to see a fanzine with great articles giving us as much art as some of the expensive ripoff "art" zines do, at one fifth the cost. The Steranko page was the highlight, with the rest being a highly important contribution and supplement to the information in the articles. Another breakthrough! Articles and illustrations that actually go hand and hand. I'll use that tired overworn phrase again to describe my reaction to the Ditko story--I don't agree with everything he implies, but I enjoy it anyway. Especially the Creeper-like aspect of the barbarian costume the hero wore. Over all, a very good issue.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY POLICY TO GIVE MY READERS THE THE MOST FOR THEIR MONEY. ARTICLES WITH ILLUSTRATIONS THAT GO WITH THEM IS PART OF THIS POLICY. I'M GLAD YOU ENJOY THIS EFFORT.

LAURINE WHITE
9408 Leader Avenue
Sacramento, Calif. 95841

The Ibis article was the usual well written job to be expected in Comic Crusader. The Fujitake strip was quite nice. I also liked your picture of Ibis, the dragon and the devil. Your idea of using a single theme with each issue makes C.C. stand out from the contents of the usual fanzine. Using magicians resulted in a good issue.

That was some picture of the Amazing Amazon. Are you sure she wasn't looking for the powder room?

I still think Tom Fagan overwrites! And I don't mean that his articles are too long. I am referring to his style--too florid. But when the subject is a Golden Age character like Mr. Mystic, the results are more satisfactory than his previous article, which covered too many heroes. And the Mr. Mystic article was well illustrated by you, as usual.

The only piece of art in the issue I didn't like was a bat-eared head by Wayne Pond. No comment on the Mr. A replacement.

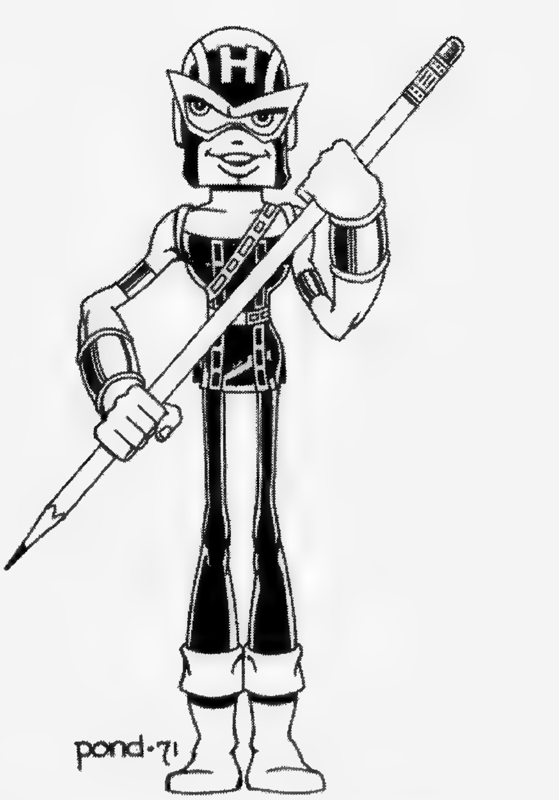
It has been so long since I've seen an illustration by Wendy Fletcher. None of her paintings graced the art shows at last year's Westercon or LACon. Can you get more artwork by her? Please!

I enjoy your articles in The Buyer's Guide and hope you and your family are doing well.

AS MR. FOX'S LETTER JUST POINTED OUT, TOM FAGAN'S ARTICLES ARE INNOVATIVE. THE ARTICLE YOU REFER TO (in C.C. #13) WAS MEANT TO BE A SHORT LOOK AT A NUMBER OF CHARACTERS WITH A 13 RELATED BACKGROUND. TO WRITE OF ONE OR TWO CHARACTERS WAS NOT THE IDEA! TOM'S MR. MYSTIC ARTICLE REMAINS AS ONE OF THE TOP PIECES EVER WRITTEN FOR A FAN PUBLICATION. I'M A BIG FAN OF WENDY (FLETCHER) PINI TOO! I'LL PUBLISH ANYTHING SHE'LL LET ME! I AND MY FAMILY "STILL LIVE!"

CRAIG A. SHUTT
134 Wolcott Dr.
Youngstown, Ohio 44512

Please, no "I told you so," if you don't mind! I've returned to C.C. sadder but wiser. One year ago when Comic Crusader upped its price, I gave up on it, like the fool I usually come out. Well, after a year of looking around, comparing prices and quality, I'm back! Like the great man once said, "I didn't know what I had until I lost it."



WHAT CAN I SAY? YOU'VE SAID IT ALL! GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK!

JIM CASSARA
6285 N.W. 111 Terr.
Hia. Fla. 33012

Comic Crusader #14 lived up to your usual high standards of artistic and written quality. The cover, while very good, was not of "Cover Quality," that is the design of it was rather unbalanced. Fujitake's superb interior illustration of Ibis would have made a much better cover. Dennis really shined this issue, as his editorial illustration and strip art were excellent. The back cover by Wendy Pini was just fantastic. This is the first I've seen by this very talented person, and I am definitely looking forward to more work by her, preferably in Comic Crusader!

The pencil illustrations by Kirby and Steranko were excellent and were certainly appropriate for your "magic" issue. The interview this issue was a bit longer than usual, but still made for enjoyable reading. One thing that makes your interviews stand out is that you interview good people who most fans have heard little about. What can one say about the articles on Ibis and Mr. Mystic? They were both very, very informative and enjoyable. The rather short piece on Black Magic Comics by Bob Cosgrove was especially interesting to me, since a large part of my collection is devoted to the works of Simon & Kirby. The other features were all very good, except Newton's Ibis, which was pure crap and not deserving to be in such a fine issue.

DON NEWTON'S IBIS "CRAP"? DON'S RENDERING CAPTURED THE FLAVOR OF THE IBIS STRIP PERFECTLY. HIS WORK CERTAINLY BELONGS IN ANY FAN OR PRO PUBLICATION LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET HIM! WITNESS HIS FANTASTIC WORK THIS ISSUE!

COMING NEXT ISSUE!

COMIC CRUSADER 16

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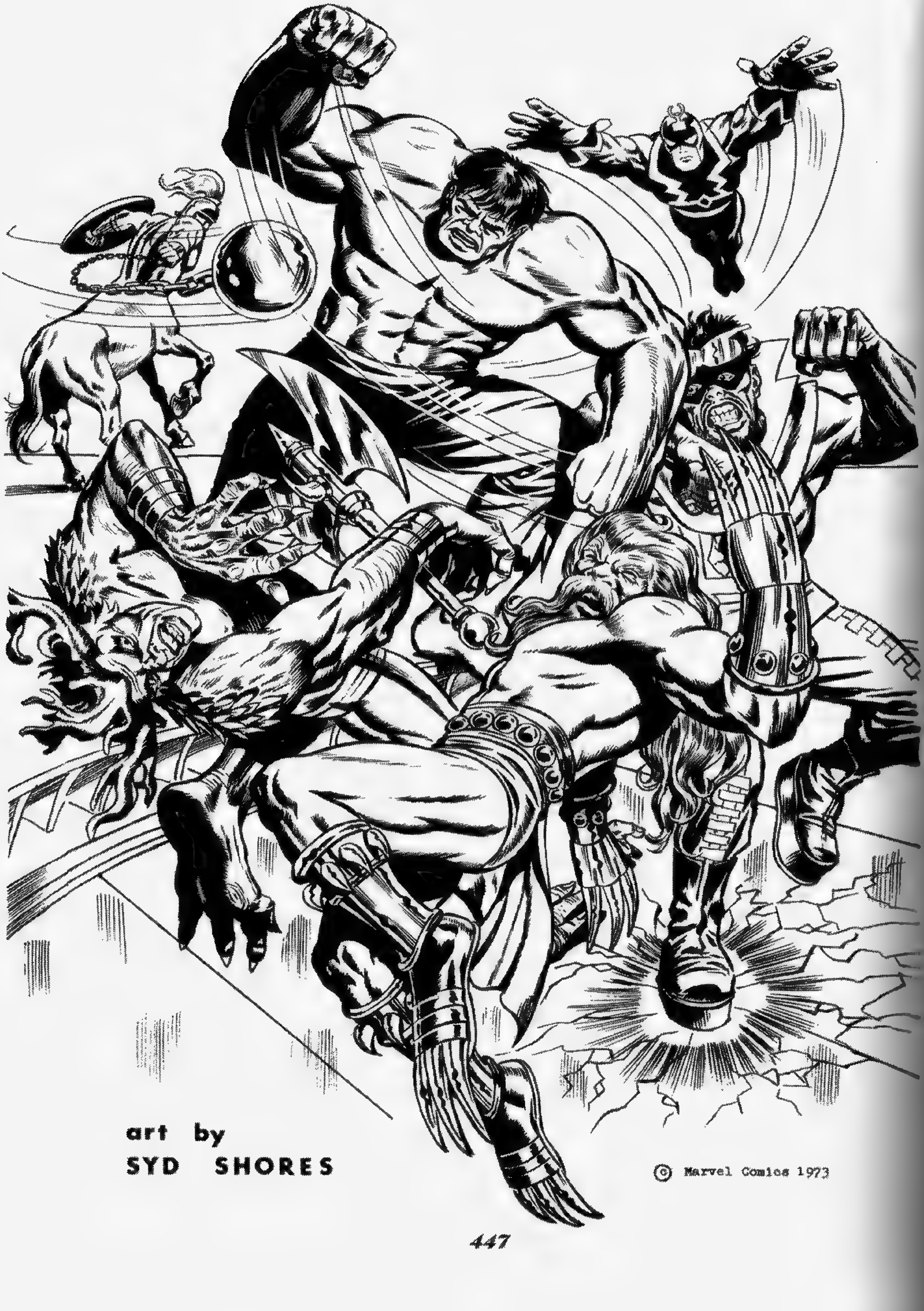

art by
SYD SHORES

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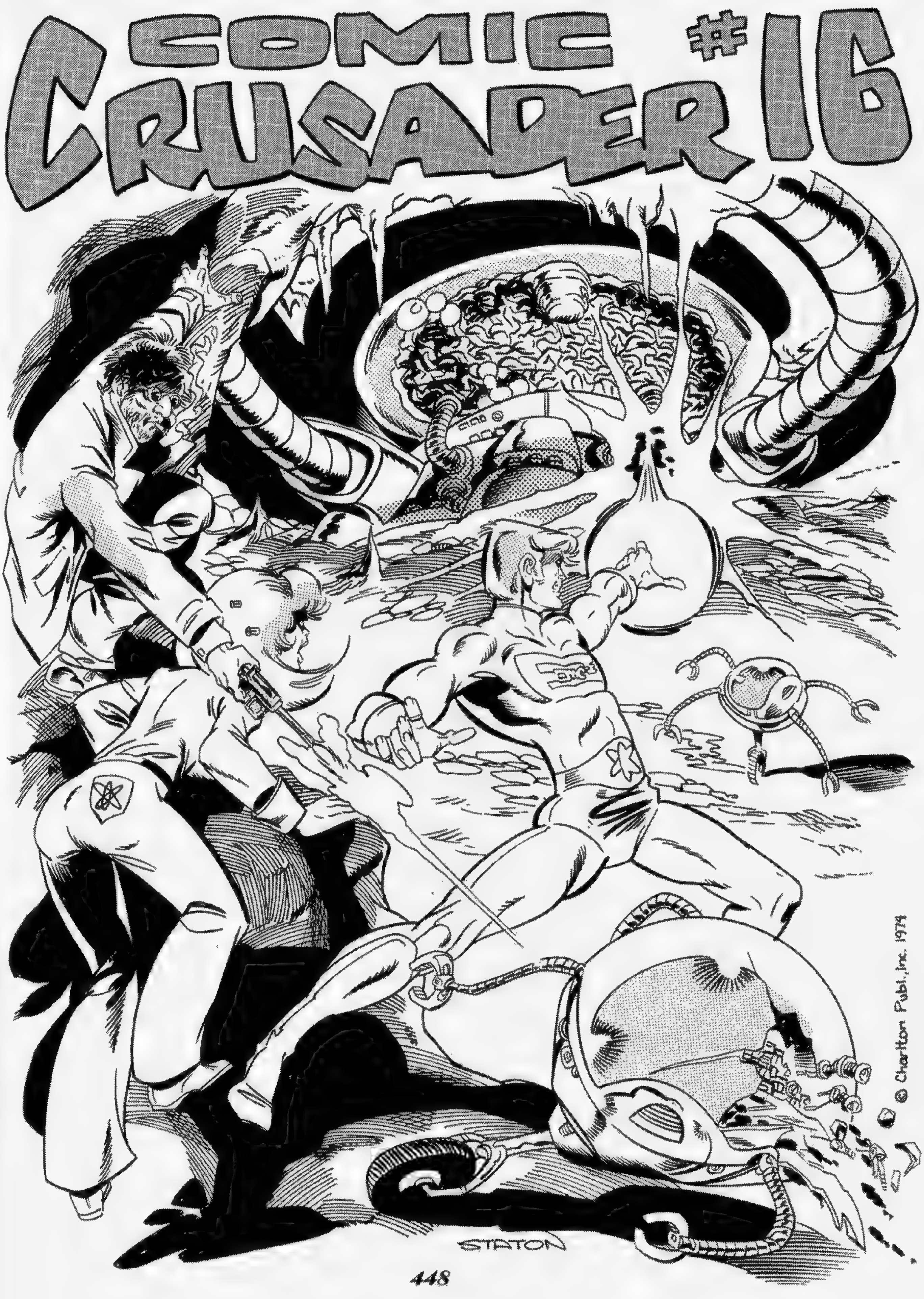

COMIC CRUSADER #16
STATON
© Charlton Publ., Inc. 1974

CRUSADER COMMENTS

THE TIME HAS COME! IT'S TIME TO ENTER THE FANTASTIC WORLD OF COMICS!

Over the years Comic Crusader has slanted its articles more towards the "golden age" than present day material. For a change of pace, this issue takes you behind the scenes of recent comics. I've selected what I feel are some of the outstanding publications of recent years and given you a new, fresh look at them. The unpublished Gil Kane "Black Mark" drawing on this page sets the pace for this issue...As does the Kirby "Sultin". He points the way to some of the finest art and articles done by fans and pro's for an amateur publication.

E-Man is a super hero far apart from the others on the comic book scene today. His adventures are fun to read, both from an artistic and writing standpoint. This is due to the care the team of Joe Staton and Nicola Cuti put into each story. At a time when the comic book racks are filled with a multitude of super hero comics, and with more on the way, one can't help but wonder if this fine book will survive. I certainly hope it can, for without E-Man, comics will be a bit less fun to read. I'd like to thank Joe Staton and Nick Cuti for all the help they gave me on this issue. You're great guys!

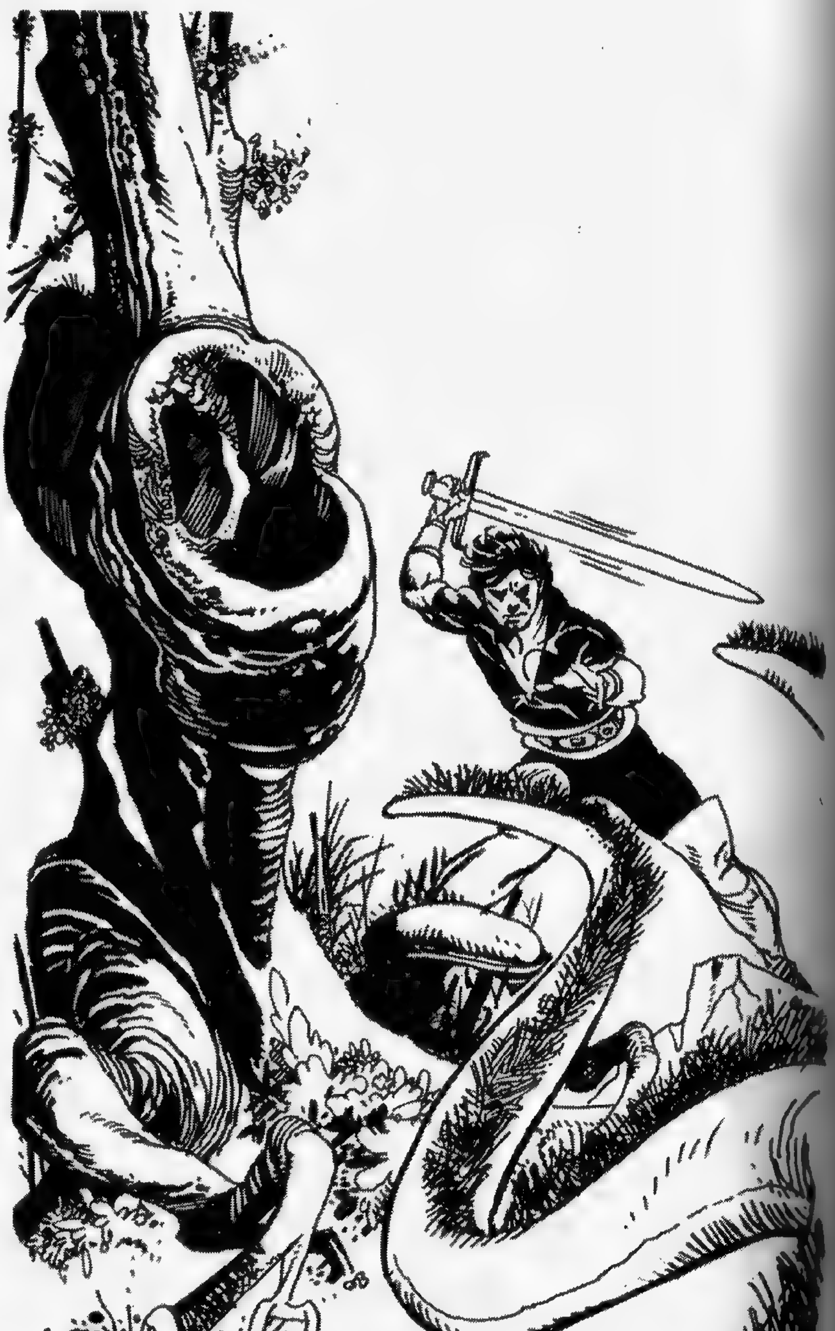
Magnus, the Robot Fighter ranks as one of the best done sci-fi adventure strips ever to appear in comics. For six years it captured the imaginations of the comic buying public with its outstanding art and writing. Now, with the help of Russ Manning, you'll see how this great series came about and see for the first time the preliminary artwork done on Magnus. I want to thank Russ for taking time out from his busy schedule on Tarzan to answer questions for this issue's interview.

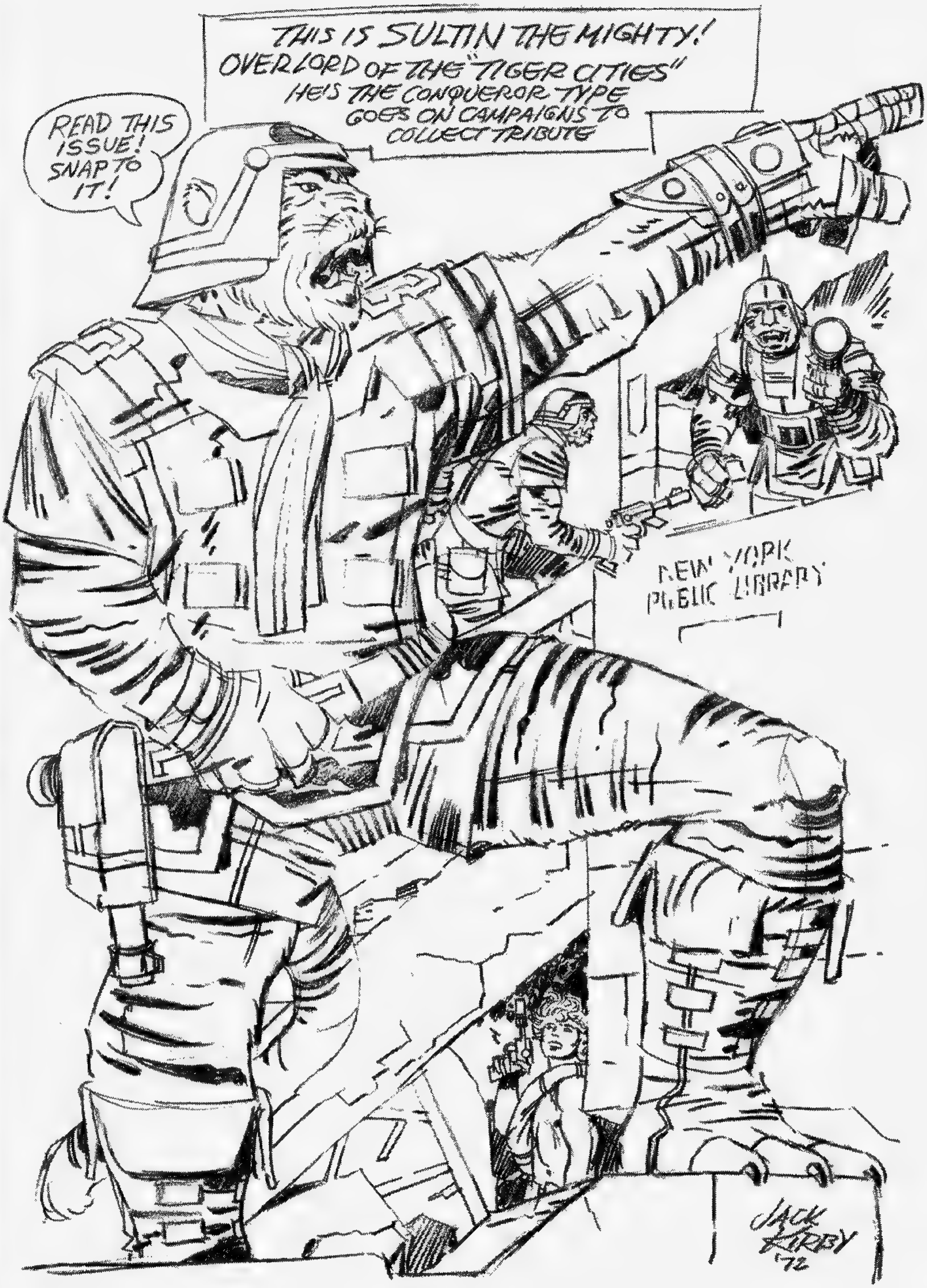
The New Gods! Kirby's dream come true. After years of being second billed on comic book credits (Simon & Kirby - Lee & Kirby) Jack Kirby left Marvel Comics and became artist, writer, and editor of a series he had long in the planning stages. For National Comics he unleashed The New Gods! A scant four years later, when this series ended, both Kirby and much of the comic reading public felt a terrible loss. Bob Cosgrove analyzes this series like it's never been done before and you'll finally see the meeting between Orion and Darkseid on the day called "Last Battle!"

When comics fans talk about humor in comic books, one name almost always comes up. When comics fans talk about Marvel Comics' "King Kull," that same name comes up again. Bruce Patterson presents an interview with one of the nicest people in comics... Marie Severin. I'm sure you'll learn much about Marie's career, that goes back to the days of EC Comics, and a woman's role in comics.

All this, plus a far out strip by former "Judo Master" artist Frank McLaughlin.

Until next time...ENJOY! -MLG

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E-MAN MEN

INTERVIEW:

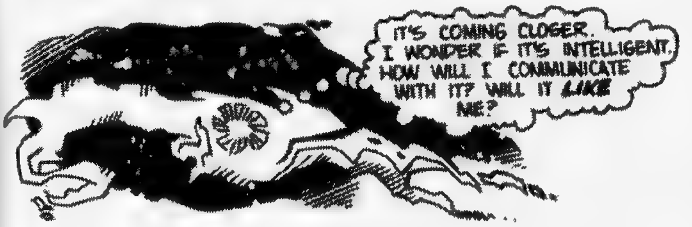
WRITER..........................NICOLA CUTI

ARTIST..........................JOE STATON

"IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT, GIVEN ETERNITY, ALL THINGS ARE NOT ONLY POSSIBLE, BUT PROBABLE. IN THE EONS OF AGES MARKING THE EXISTENCE OF OUR UNIVERSE, THERE CAME A TIME FOR MAN...AND, SOON AFTERWARDS IN THE NOVA OF AN UNNAMED STAR, THERE CAME A TIME FOR... E-MAN!"

It was also time for one of the most satirical, enjoyable costumed heroes to come along in 20 years! Charlton editor George Wildman had decided to ad a super hero to the Charlton line of comics and the two men responsible for this heroes creation were NICOLA CUTI and JOE STATON.

It isn't often a comic of E-MAN's caliber comes along, so it is with great pride that Comic Crusader presents an interview with its writer/artist team.


IT'S COMING CLOSER. I WONDER IF IT'S INTELLIGENT. HOW WILL I COMMUNICATE WITH IT? WILL IT *LIKE* ME?

(E-MAN AS ENERGY)

The Writer...NICOLA CUTI

C.C. Where and when were you born?

N.C. I was born on October 29, 1944 in Brooklyn, New York.

C.C. When did you first get interested in art/writing?

N.C. I've been drawing all my life (Who hasn't?), but I first became interested in comics through my grandmother who gave me comics to read when I visited her. They were EC comics and even at the tender age of 7 I was impressed with the style of the art and stories. I retold those stories to the kids in my neighborhood and when I ran out of EC tales I began to make up my own. Somehow the stories created a truce between my gang (I was the only Italian-Catholic in an all Jewish gang) and our worst enemies (an all Italian gang). Literature may be the way to a world truce.

C.C. What was your first professionally published work?

N.C. My first story to be published was written while I was serving time in the U.S. Air Force. It was called "GRUB" and was illustrated by Tom Sutton and published by Jim Warren. It was about a group of Space explorers who board a giant Star Ship only to discover, too late, that the ship is a carnivore who hasn't eaten in over a decade.

C.C. You worked at Warren Publications as a writer and contributing editor. How long did you work there? As a contributing editor were your duties more than writing or was that just a title? Are there any stories you'd care to relate about working for Warren?

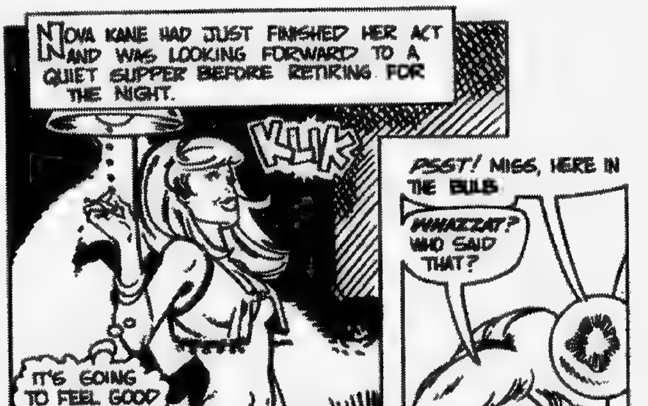
N.C. I worked for Jim Warren for over a year. The title of contributing editor was given to me by Jim instead of the raise which I had asked for and was no more than a title. Later I was made editor of a project which never came to be. I was given this job mainly to act as mediator between Jim Warren and Wally Wood, who did not see eye to eye on the project. The result of this tenuious relationship ended in a court trial where Woody and I sided against Jim. Since that time we've all become friends again and hopefully will remain such. Jim had given me my first break and Woody has been a friend, teacher and inspiration since the first day I met him.

C.C. You've worked both in underground comix and regular comics. Which media gives you the most satisfaction?

N.C. That's hard to say. The underground gives me total freedom which is a terrible responsibility. At least in regular comics I am restricted and must be creative under confining rules which is quite a challange and I have some fine artists to rely on for weaknesses in my stories, but in the underground I am alone and must sink or swim. However, despite the fact that the regular comics gives me regular employment, there can be no greater satisfaction than being able to point to a piece of work that is entirely my own.

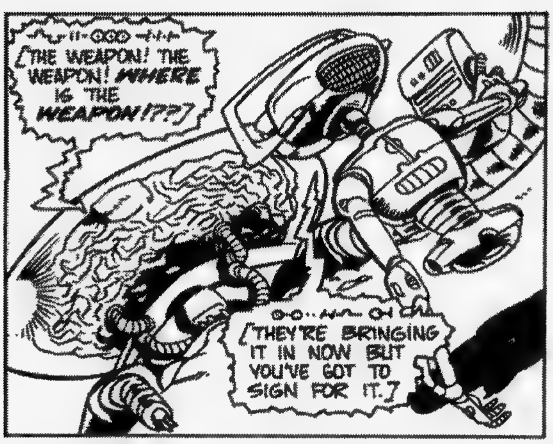
C.C. How did your character Moonchild come about?

N.C. In Time Magazine I read an article which described a Science Fiction heroine called Barbarella and I pictured her to be a voluptuous, little, raven-haired nymph. While on tour in France I finally saw the comic strip of Barbarella and was dissappointed that she did not appear as I had pictured her. I therefore decided to design her myself. From a Playboy centerfold of Gwyne Wong I copped Moonchild's hairdo and when I reached the States I showed her to Wally Wood (she had been published namelessly in a French magazine called "Singulier-Pluriel") and he convinced me to publish her on my own, which I did in Maine. The result was "Moonchild Comics" which was less than an


NOVA KANE HAD JUST FINISHED HER ACT AND WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO A QUIET SUPPER BEFORE RETIRING FOR THE NIGHT.
KLIK
IT'S GOING TO FEEL GOOD TO GET INTO *CLOTHES*.
PSST! MISS, HERE IN THE BULB
WHAZZAT? WHO SAID THAT?

(EXOTIC DANCER, NOVA KANE, MEETS E-MAN FOR THE FIRST TIME, IN A RATHER UNUSUAL MANNER.)

(E-MAN'S FIRST FOE...THE BRAIN!)


-AH-II-OOO-III-
THE WEAPON! THE WEAPON! WHERE IS THE WEAPON!?!?
O-O-AH-OH
THEY'RE BRINGING IT IN NOW BUT YOU'VE GOT TO SIGN FOR IT.

overwhelming success but it gave me a start.

C.C. You worked on two short lived publications, Web of Horror and Blast. Will you comment on your time with these magazines?

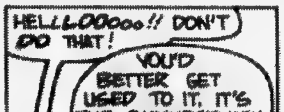
N.C. I wrote the first story in WEB called "Growth" which was illustrated by a then budding young artist, Wayne Howard. Wayne and I became close friends when I moved to Connecticut and has proven that he has the talent to back his early promise. BLAST allowed me to draw Moonchild again, but I consider it to have been my worst effort since I was working under the shadow of Wally Wood and still fighting to keep my own style. The result was a disaster.

C.C. What writers/artists in the comic book field do you most admire?

N.C. Wallace Wood, Berni Wrightson, Wayne Howard, Joe Staton, Will Eisner, Vaughn Bode, Frank Frazetta, Jeff Jones, Ralph Reese, Al Feldstein (as a writer), Archie Goodwin, and Tom Sutton.

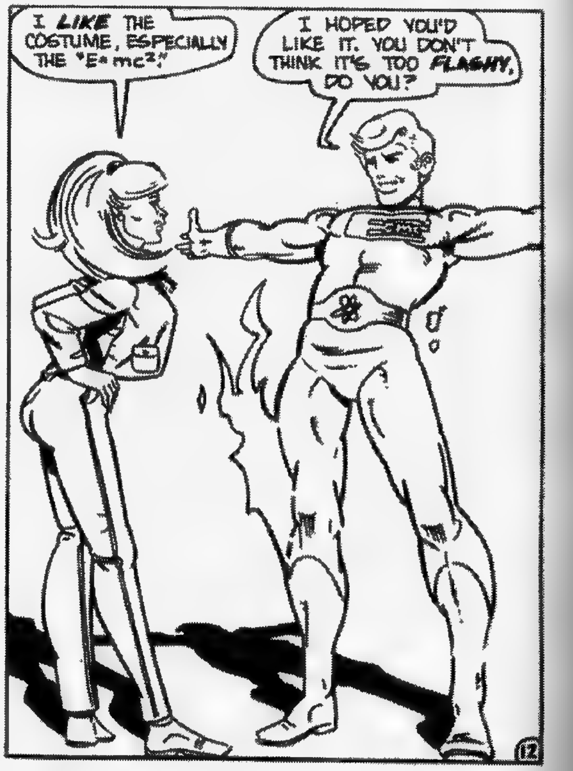
C.C. How did you become connected with Charlton and what does your job as assistant managing editor there entail?

N.C. Wally Wood and I had started a studio together (Wood Studio) in Long Island and later we conned Jack Able (one of the funniest men I've ever met) and the Syd Shores (one of the nicest guys I've ever met) into joining us. Despite the company and the work I could not stay at the studio because I made only forty a week. Tony Tallerico, who lived nearby and acted as a free lance editor at Charlton told me that Charlton needed an assistant editor of comics and asked if I was interested. I WAS! An interview was set up between myself and George Wildman, the Comic Editor, where I arrived two hours late due to the New York traffic. George hired me anyway and to this day I could not be more pleased. I have been very fortunate in finding encouraging and helpful people in my chosen career of which George is far from the least. It is his progressive thinking and faith in my abilities that have caused many of my stories to see light. As his assistant I confer with him on new projects and do a major part of the production work on our 40 comics. (Despite the glamourous title, the production manager does little more than correct errors in the artwork and dialogue.)


HELLLOOOoo!! DON'T DO THAT!
YOU'D BETTER GET USED TO IT. IT'S THE QUICKEST WAY FOR ME TO TRAVEL.

(A PERFECT BLEND OF ARTISTIC AND WRITTEN HUMOR.)

C.C. How and when did the creation of E-Man come about?

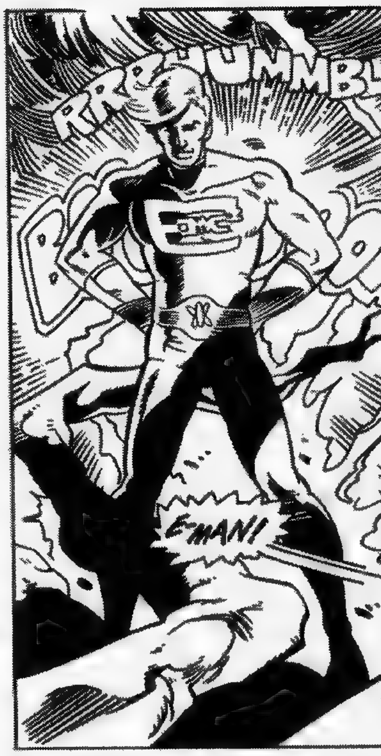

I LIKE THE COSTUME, ESPECIALLY THE "E=mc²."
I HOPED YOU'D LIKE IT. YOU DON'T THINK IT'S TOO FLASHY, DO YOU?
12

(THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF E-MAN IN COSTUME.)

N.C. One day George turned to me and said; "Nick, I've just talked management into trying out super-heroes again. See what you can come up with." I remembered the early Plasticman by Jack Cole and how similar Joe Staton's artwork was to Cole's. However, I wanted a character more powerful than Plas and still have him based on a simple premise. Einstein's famous equation E=mc^2 gave me that premise...a creature who could change from any form of energy into any form of matter.

C.C. You've handled E-Man, so far, in a wonderfully semi-humorous vein...similar to Bill Everett's Hydroman and the way Fawcett's Captain Marvel used to be. Was this your intent from the start and will you be able to keep him in this vein?

N.C. I originally did not intend E-Man to be humorous, but some of the situations I had contrived for him were so outlandish that it became impossible for me to remain serious. I never try to force the humor which I believe to be the failure of many previous attempts at Super-hero Satire, but rather I allow the characters to meet absurd situations with lightness instead of with the seriousness that the situation demands. That is why I feel that James Bond was such a success while so many of the copies were such dismal failures. Joe Staton is responsible for adding comic touches which are not in my script and always with good results, so I give him Carte Blanche with my basic story...well, almost.


KRRUMMBLLLE!!
BOOM!
E-MAN!

C.C. What about Nova Kane? How did she come about?

N.C. I was sick and tired of the bloodless, career girls and goody-goody super heroines who seemed to always be the girlfriends of Super heroes. E-Man's girlfriend was going to be smart, to offset his own naieveness, but she was also going to be sexy as hell.

C.C. Have you had much comment about Nova's job as an exotic dancer? Who thought of that profession?

N.C. Nova's profession was chosen by myself, being a long-time fan of burlesque, and thus far we have received no objections to her trade (remember she only does it part-time since she is nobly working her way through college) from any of our readers...instead we've received applause.

C.C. Is Nova's real name, Katrinka Colchnzski, based on anyone in particular, or is it just made up?

N.C. Katrinka was the name of a character from the "Toonerville Trolly" comic strip of many years ago and the name Colchnzski came from a teacher I had in High School, who first taught me to have pride in my name. It had often been suggested that I change my name, but Colchnzski never changed his, so why should I change mine.

C.C. The Entropy Twins story in E-Man #2 was a beautifully balanced story. It had humor, drama and an emotional ending. Not many stories today can claim that. How did you happen to hit on the idea for the twins?

N.C. From the science book "One, Two, Three...Infinity" by George Gamow. Entropy is the tendency for a closed system toward disorder and I reasoned that extreme order could also be dangerous to a system. I, therefore, created the twins and played them against each other. First they worked in a symbiotic relationship and then, with E-Man as the catalyst, they worked against each other. I tried to milk the idea for all it was worth. So many stories are left hanging because an author could not see all of the possibilities of an idea.

C.C. How has E-Man done sales wise? Will he be with us a while? Also, how has reader response been?

N.C. Reader response has been excellent, both in the form of letters, subscriptions and sales. E-Man's future will depend on an increase in sales, which we expect to occur.

C.C. E-Man has come about at the wain of the current Super hero craze. The wierd/horror titles seem to be in vogue today. Would you say the Super hero trend is on the upswing again? If this is the case, will we be seeing more Super heroes at Charlton?

N.C. We are planning more Super-heroes at Charlton because we don't believe that Super-heroes are on the wain. We think that readers are merely sick of quantity in this field and are searching for quality.

C.C. How much scientific research have you had to do regarding E-Man?

N.C. Science is a hobby of mine and although I am not actively involved in any particular area, I enjoy reading about this subject. When I wrote "The Entropy Twins" I referred to four other books besides the one mentioned before.

C.C. Do you find E-Man compared to Charlton's former hero Capt. Atom at all?

N.C. I never read Capt. Atom.

C.C. Does anything influence your writing on E-Man? Movies, novels etc.

N.C. Everything influences my writing on E-Man and my writing in general. I watch T.V., I go to movies, as often as I can afford to, and I read whenever I find time. By saturating myself with story ideas and analyzing these plots I find out what has been done before and if an idea I have is really unique. Often I get ideas from plots which another author did not use to its full potential. Books on how to write are useless. You learn to write by absorbing thousands of stories, both through actual and vicarious experiences, and then writing your own.

C.C. What is your work day like?

N.C. By day I edit books, read and answer letters concerning fan mail, scripts and artwork and by night I write and draw. Somewhere in between I eat, sleep and go on dates.

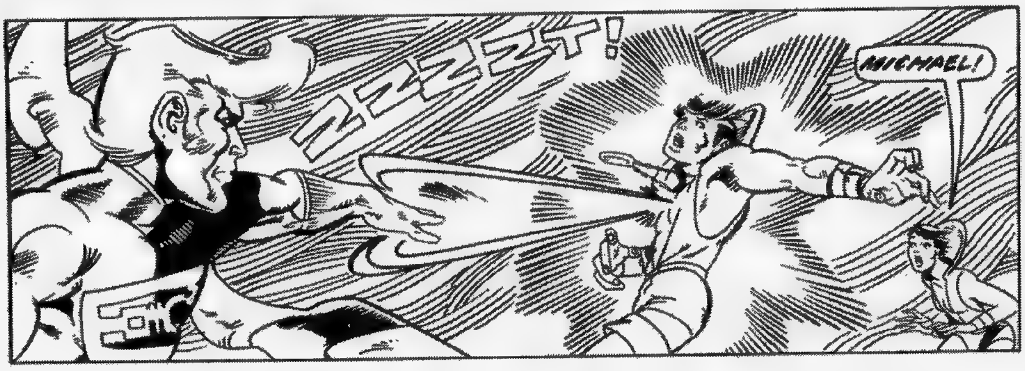
C.C. When the originally scheduled story "City in the Sand" was moved from issue #3 to issue #4 to make room for the Energy Crisis book, did that in any way throw your continuity of the E-Man character off?

N.C. No, not really, because each story is complete not a continuity. Even though I do intend to bring back old adversaries, E-Man attacks each new problem as if it were his first and nothing had gone before. Now that the character is established, I have no intention of changing him since it is the strong character in literature who is remembered...Sherlock Holmes, Dracula, Scrooge, etc.

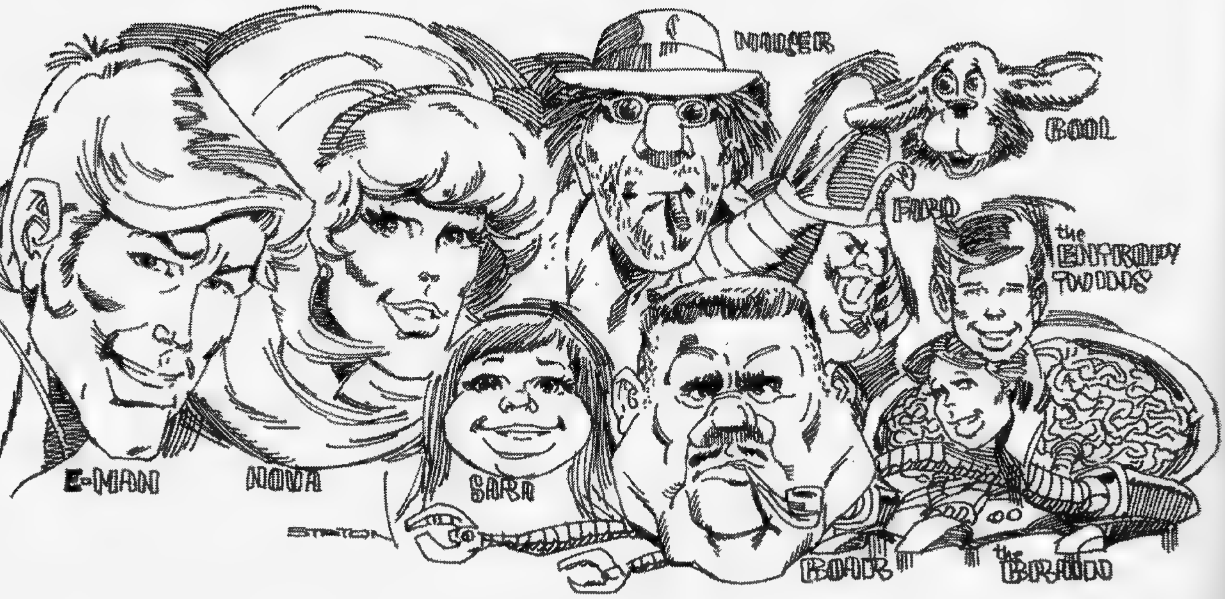
C.C. What does the future hold for you and E-Man?

N.C. If I knew that I'd be telling fortunes instead of writing comics. I only know that I feel grateful to be working for a small, but rapidly rising, company like Charlton, doing what I care about the most.

C.C. Nicola Cuti's writing certainly shows he cares about what he's doing. Now let's take a look at the other half of the team.


ZZZZZT!
MICHAEL!

(THIS SCENE AND THE ONE ABOVE SHOW THE DRAMATIC ARTISTRY AND STORYTELLING OF THE CUTI-STATON TEAM, AS E-MAN BATTLES THE ENTROPY TWINS IN E-MAN #2.)



The Artist...JOE STATON

*Note: This is not the first time Joe Staton has been interviewed in Comic Crusader. Issue #13 gave an account of his early days and his work on Charlton's now defunct title Primus. Before we get into the E-Man related questions, I'd like to review part of that interview that was conducted by Ron Fortier.

R.F. Joe, in case the FBI gets a hold of this, how about some basic statistics such as where and when you were born?

J.S. I was born 19 January, 1948, at the Army hospital at Ft. Bragg, N.C.; thus making me, in no particular order, a Capricorn (on the cusp of Aquarius — a classically ambiguous combination of signs,) a service brat, and 24 years old at the moment. My father was an Air Force career man and we bounced about from base to base during most of my early days, during which I picked up a love of airplanes and a dislike for staying in one place very long. After my father's death, we moved back to my mother's home in Tennessee, where I spent a rather constricted adolescence.

R.F. What kind of formal education did you acquire?

J.S. I went to college in Murray, Kentucky, where I more or less majored in fine arts and wound up with my bachelor's degree in art. During that time I scrounged up a scholarship from Chapman College in California, to their World Campus Afloat program (the program that was recently going to convert the Queen Elizabeth to its campus) and so spent about four months aboard ship studying in Europe, Africa and South America.

R.F. What encouraged you to try work in comics?

J.S. I had encountered Danny Adkins through the sf fanzines and had, for a short time, corresponded with him, finding out what I might expect if I tried to get into comics. Danny had a pronounced influence on most of my earlier drawings. At any rate, after I got my degree, I left for New York with an eye toward landing comics work. Eventually, I got my first comic assignment — a short, badly written Steve Skeats story from Warren for CREEPY. (The Amazing Money-Making Wallet....Creepy #42 Nov. '71).

R.F. How did you get along with the notorious Mr. W?

J.S. Warren turned out to be a great deal more trouble than he was worth. I wanted to draw comic books and he thought comics should be filled with slick advertising illustrations. So I eventually got tired of hasseling with him and mailed in the story with a bill. He paid me, ran the story and I never went back there.

R.F. How did you finally hook-up with Charlton?

J.S. During an abbreviated honeymoon, we stopped in at Charlton. I got a ghost story to do and Sal Gentile, Charlton's editor at the time, and a very nice man, was sufficently pleased to send me another. Before any of the ghost work had actually been printed, Sal offered me PRIMUS. Things have been pretty solid since then.

R.F. What other artists, besides Dan Adkins, do you admire?

J.S. To be perfectly honest with you, it would be a lot easier to come up with a list of people that I don't like. However, I'll try to nail down a few favorites. Gil Kane is sort of a basic style to respect; especially his early Green Lantern work as inked by Anderson. Jim Aparo and Neal Adams are beautiful in the faces they use. Each of their characters fits his part perfectly. Lou Fine and Jack Davis for their characterizations, too. Russ Manning for his authenticity (his old SEA HUNT comics are the optimum skin diver comics.) Steve Ditko as a really unique visual vocabulary, and a keen sense of design. Joe Kubert as the only guy in the business with an understanding of figure-ground relationships. I told you this would get out of hand... why not just say that I consider Don Heck and Herb Trimpe incompetent, but that I enjoy just about everybody else? Oh, one other fellow who has been remarkably helpful to me is Mike Hinge. (Mike does a lot of covers for AMAZING and FANTASTIC, covers for Lancer and a couple of Time covers.) Mike is a great source of information about tax laws, billing procedures, publishers, shucks—all the nitty-gritty that keeps your head above water, the things that the art schools don't know about.

Now that some background information has been established, let's look into Joe's E-Man work.

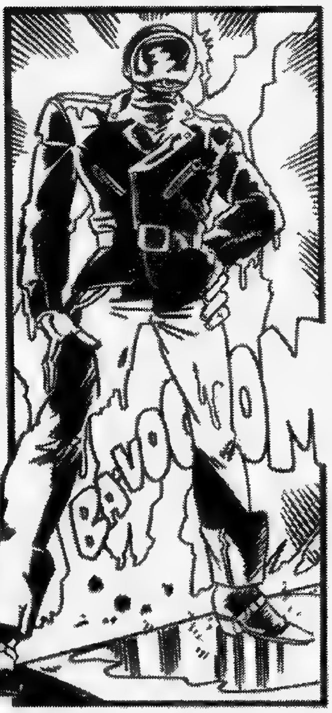
C.C. What were your feelings when you learned of your E-Man assignment?

J.S. I'm afraid that my feelings were a bit mixed. I had missed having a regular character of my own, so I was happy on that score, but from Nick's initial description of his idea for E-Man, I was afraid we were just going into a retread of Captain Atom. Not that I had anything against the Captain, I just thought the idea had been done to death by now. Fortunately, the first script persuaded me that I had little to worry about.

C.C. Did you submit many costume ideas for E-Man?

J.S. No. I just submitted the one presentation drawing completely on spec. That was the drawing that was printed up as the E-Man poster. I did several little sketches on my own, figuring out the costume before I did the presentation drawing. Nick told me to draw whatever sort of costume I wanted, except that he thought a cape would be a bit too much. I agreed, and on working out the sketches, I also decided that a mask would look dumb.

(THE BATTERY)



C.C. E-Man looks a bit like the actor Roger Moore. Did his recent James Bond movie, and in fact do movies in general, influence you?

J.S. Yes, on both counts. When I did the presentation drawing of E-Man I used Robert Redford as a suggestion for the face, since I vaguely had in mind the thought of a young cleancut blonde for the hero, but that didn't really work so well...I had lots of trouble keeping his face consistent in the first couple of issues, as you may have noticed, but were too kind to mention...and when I saw the Bond movie--such a lovely junk movie it was--I realized that Moore was very much closer to what I wanted. So I went out and bought his ghosted book on making the Bond movie, so I could study his face a bit more. Of course, as I get on better terms with E-Man himself, his personality asserts itself and the face changes, but basically it's Moore.

And on that subject, Nova was originally modelled on photos of Kim Novack as she appeared in a TV movie "The Third Girl on the Left," I think it was. And for the character of Mauser, Nick told me that he was thinking of introducing a supporting character to figure in a sort of Midnight Cowboy relationship with Alec Tronn. He suggested that he might look something like the Mole (digdigdig...) So starting from that I kept Dustin Hoffman in mind, and Mauser emerged as an amalgam of Ratso Rizzo and the Hoffman character in "Papillon." I cut out faces from newspapers and TV Guide and buy up lots of movie books from the remainder stores, so I can have the faces handy. It's like having Central Casting on call.

And in general, I love motion pictures, and I do my best work when I'm working in front of the TV with an old movie going...preferably something from the forties. And when I manage to get out of the house, it's usually to go to a movie. They're great for not only faces, but nuances of action, settings, atmospherics, camera tricks...lots of things. While I'm drawing, I sometimes get the feeling that my mind is under the control of Michael Curtiz or Raoul Walsh...and there are moments of absolute despair when I'm sure that Roger Corman has seized control.

C.C. Do you prefer doing super hero stories to horror and romance stories?

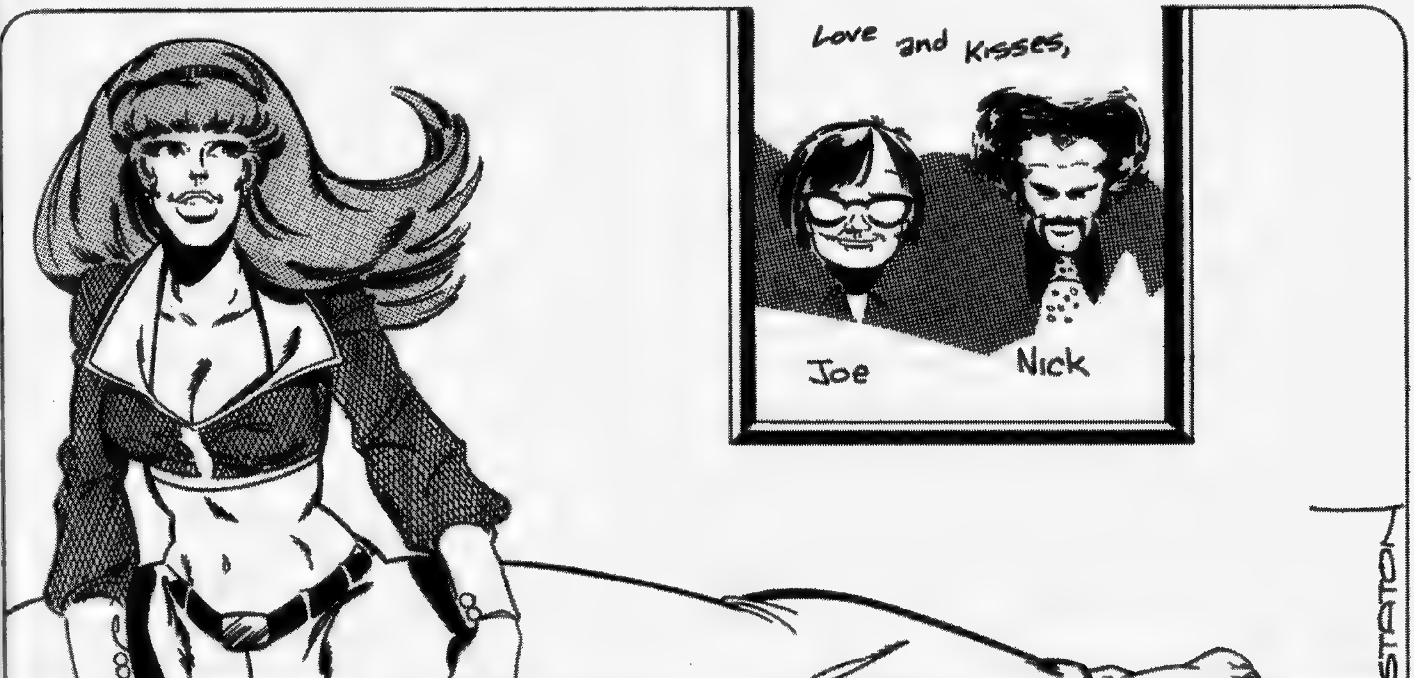
J.S. Not really. While I prefer doing a regular character to lots of unrelated stories, what I really want to do is science fiction, which, unfortunately, has a pretty bad sales record. But E-Man keeps me pretty well content with all the sf elements that Nick throws into his scripts.

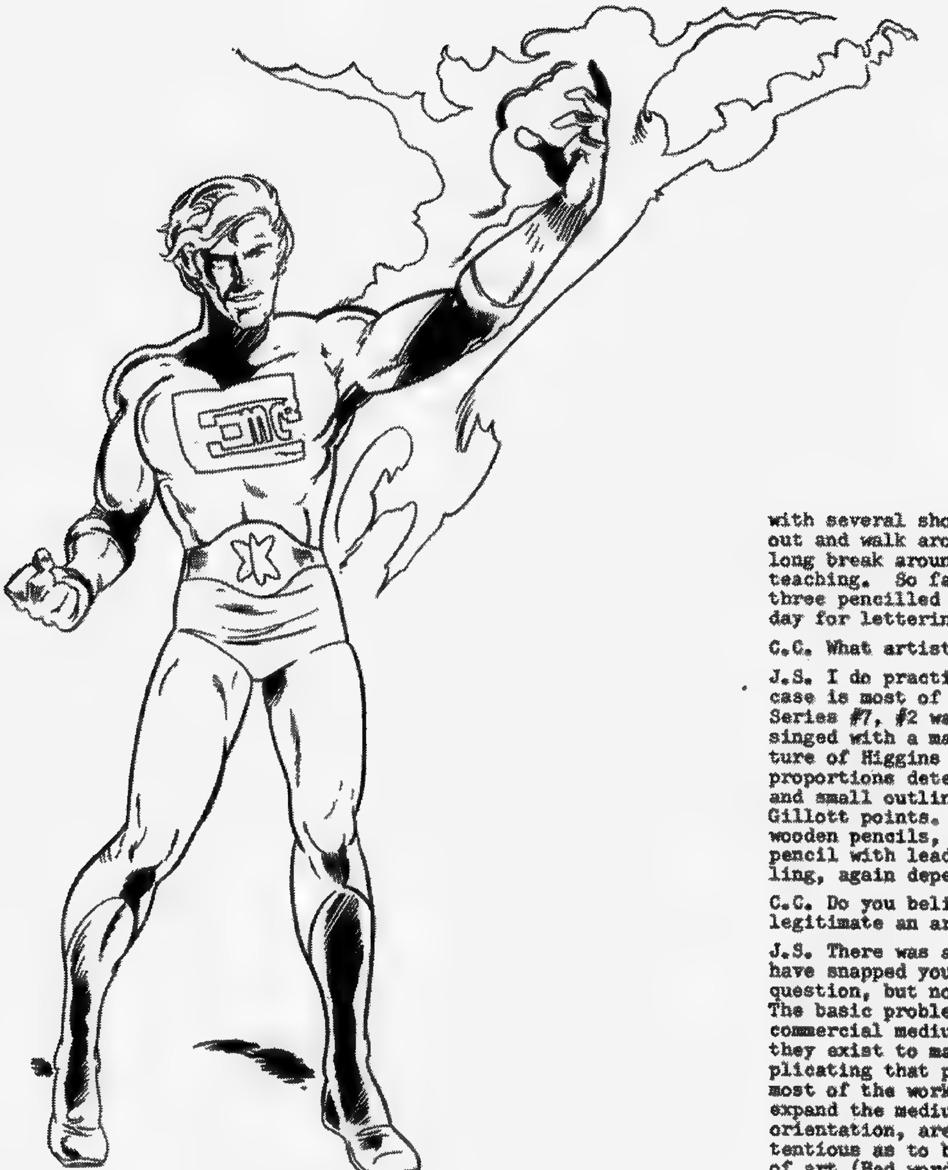
C.C. Has your fan mail increased since you began E-Man?

J.S. Considerably.

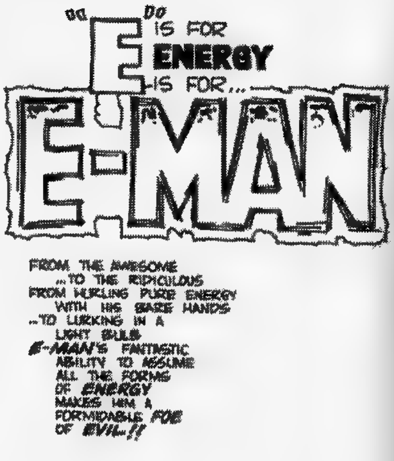
C.C. At Charlton most of the artists pencil and ink their own work. Do you prefer this arrangement, or would you rather have someone else ink your work?

J.S. Yes. I prefer to do all my own work, if possible. In general, it seems that the more people that have a hand in something, the less chance there is of a coherent effect. And on a practical level, it's just easier for me, since I really





(PRESENTATION DRAWING OF E-MAN)



do most of my drawing with the brush and my pencils are just very general indications of what I want in a panel. I'm almost certain that tightening up the pencils for someone else to ink would destroy the feeling of spontanaeity that I'm after in the strip.

C.C. Do you run into much of a problem with E-Man's chest insignia? Having to draw E=mc^2 must get a bit tedious at times.

J.S. It's not so much trouble since the emblem is basically just a rectangle with some squiggles inside it.

C.C. Do you find E-Man easier to work on than Primus, where you had to make the lead characters resemble those on the TV show?

J.S. Well, I had a lot of trouble with Robert Brown's face in PRIMUS, and didn't quite get the hang of it until about the sixth issue, but as I said, I also had a bit of uncertainty figuring out E-Man's face as well. Took about four issues to get it straight. Once I have the face figured out, it's not much trouble to keep drawing it.

C.C. What is your work day like? About how long does it take to pencil and ink a page of E-Man?

J.S. I usually start work around 11:30 in the morning and work until somewhere around midnight, with several short breaks during the day, when I go out and walk around the pond or some such, and a long break around 4:30, when my wife gets in from teaching. So far, E-Man has been done at a rate of three pencilled or three inked pages a day, with one day for lettering.

C.C. What artists tools do you work with basically?

J.S. I do practically all of my inking, which in my case is most of my drawing, with a Winsor-Newton, Series #7, #2 water color brush that's been slightly singed with a match to even the tip; and use a mixture of Higgins and Rapidograph inks, with the proportions determined by the weather. For shadings and small outline work I use Hunt Crow Quill or Gillott points. Since I have a marked dislike for wooden pencils, I use a mechanical draftsman's pencil with leads ranging from H to 2B for pencilling, again depending mainly on the humidity.

C.C. Do you believe that the comic art form is as legitimate an artistic form as any other?

J.S. There was a time not so long ago, when I would have snapped you a quick and certain "yes," to that question, but now I'd have to give it some thought. The basic problem is that comics are primarily a commercial medium, rather than an artistic one... they exist to make money for somebody. And complicating that particular handicap, is the fact that most of the work which I've seen which attempts to expand the medium beyond the strictly money-making orientation, are so self-consciously arty and pretentious as to be self-defeating. Legitimate works of art (Bad word, "art," but let's use it anyway...) are very seldom created by persons setting out to make money, and they are never created by persons setting out to make "Art," with a capital "A." Valid works of art can—and have—turned up in the oddest places, but they are usually the product of an individual possessing uncommon insight stating his or her view of the world in the medium which comes most readily to hand, or in which the individual feels most comfortable. McLuhan possibly to the contrary, it isn't the medium which matters so much as the individual.

C.C. You and Nicola Cuti seem to work very well together. Are his scripts fairly easy to work from and do you have a free hand in the way you depict a character?

J.S. In the past, sometimes the mechanics of Nick's scripts have been a little rough—mostly in the matter of fitting a story to a specific number of pages—which made the pacing of certain sequences a little difficult, but lately he seems to have gotten past that...and that was the only problem I ever really had with any of his stuff. The strength of Nick's stories are his characterizations and dialog. His characters are unusually vivid, which obviously makes it easier for me to visualize them. Usually he gives me free rein with the appearances, and when he thinks a specific appearance is important to the story, he calls up and we talk it over before I draw it. Usually that amounts to nothing more than something like: "Hey, Nick, I'm gonna make Boar really disgusting." "Okay, make him disgusting, but don't make him look like Porky Pig gone wrong. Keep him looking human."

C.C. I enjoyed your "Gods of Mount Olympus" for Quintessence Publications. Would you like to do this type of material for a pro publication, ala Marvel's Thor?

J.S. Well, yes and yes. Yes, I'd like to do this sort of thing pro; and yes, I'd like to do Thor. THE GODS is intended to be a straight retelling of classical myths, while Thor is strictly a superhero with only nominal relationship to the myths. I like them both, but if you're reading GODS as superhero stuff, I'm doing something terribly wrong.

C.C. No, I'm not reading GODS as superhero stuff, but Thor is the closest Gods related material being presented pro today——thus my reason for asking. Also, for you readers who haven't seen a copy of "Gods of Mount Olympus" I highly recomend that you send for a copy to: QUINTESSENCE PUBLICATIONS/ P.O. BOX 5246/ SPOKANE, WA./ 99205. This is a series of 16 page tabloid size papers with adaptations of Greek myths by Johnny Achziger and some beautiful art by Joe Staton. Price per single issue is $1.00 3/ $2.75 6/ $5.00.

C.C. Did you design the E-Man logo, or was that done by someone at Charlton?

J.S. I did it, sort of by accident. I just blocked it in on the presentation drawing and when the character was given the go-ahead by the powers that be, George and Nick decided that they liked it well enough to use as the standing logo, so they paid me for it and blew it up to cover size.

C.C. E-Man stories have been both relevant and pure fantasy. Do you prefer doing fantasy and do you think relevant stories have a place in what is basically escapist entertainment?

J.S. I favor the Elwood P. Dowd school of story-telling. Elwood, you'll recall, was ambling down a perfectly normal street and came upon a perfectly ordinary lamppost at the corner of 18th and Fairfax, except that there was a rather out-of-the-ordinary giant white rabbit named Harvey leaning against that post. I find that I respond best to storylines that are well grounded in mundanity, but which are warped by large elements of fancy. E-Man, for example, lives in the same rather wretched world I do. When he's in New York, there's garbage in the streets, he has to step over sleeping drunks, the phones don't work, but the rates go up anyway. It's a very real world he inhabits, and I would forfeit any claim to artistic integrity if I drew it any other way than I do, but in that world he runs into things that don't happen in my world... giant brains from outer space, energy stealing robots, weird stuff made remarkable by being grounded in grubby reality. I think "relevant" bits (or rather than relevant, we say that E-Man is "current..." Blame Cuti for that, not me.) can be good plot pegs for fantasy, and that fantasy entirely divorced from relevance too often degenerates into saccharine slush, but that when relevancy gets the upper hand, you get such supremely inane episodes as Green Lantern in the coal mines...arrrgh. The best stories are always located somewhere around 18th and Fairfax.

C.C. Your artistic range on E-Man has been outstanding. You've depicted humor, drama and a wee bit of sex. Your work now seems different than your early work. Have you found that your approach to comic art has changed much since you first began?

J.S. Of course. When I first began, I had trouble just getting control of my tools, so the early work is sort of tentative, and often unpleasantly tight. Then as I got command of the mechanics, I started to concentrate on characters, and then on layouts. Usually, when I think I've gotten to the point where I can do one thing pretty well, I'll start doing something else. That doesn't do much good in terms of product identity, but it does serve to keep the job interesting.

C.C. Nicola Cuti thinks your art is reminiscent of Jack Cole's on Plastic Man. Do you concur?

J.S. Just on the most superficial level, there probably isn't that much similarity. My characters don't look all that much like Cole's, and I don't break down stories the way he did. But once you get past the superficials, down to seeing the way he looked at the world, and the way he felt for his characters, I find a tremendous sense of kinship with his work.

C.C. Have any artists in particular influenced your work?

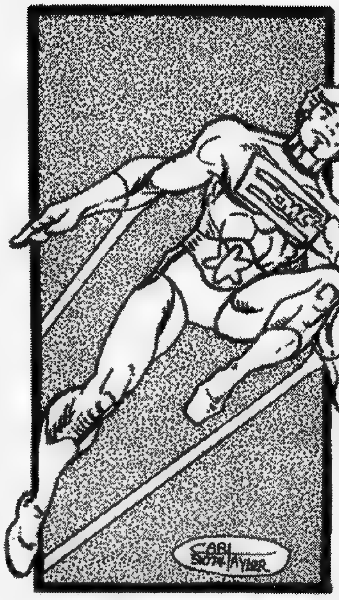
J.S. I'd say that every bit of visual work I've ever seen has influenced the way I work. Whenever I try to come up with a list of people, it comes out different and gets longer every time. I think the primary thing to consider is that I'm as much influenced by Reginald Marsh and Caroll Reed as by Wally Wood and Will Eisner.

C.C. Some artists dislike doing covers. What are your feelings about doing E-Man covers?

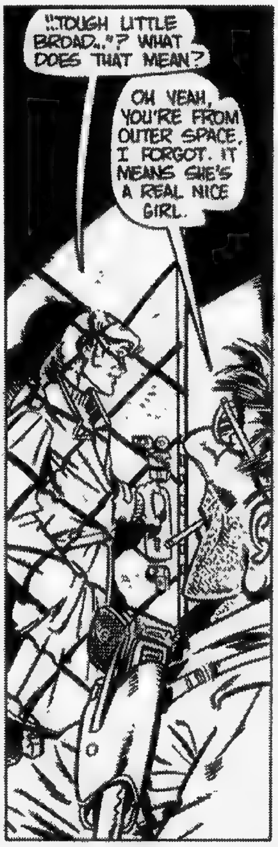
J.S. Sort of mixed. I like the idea of doing covers, but I'm not generally all that satisfied with my results. I really try very hard to avoid the run-of-the-mill comic cover with the medium shot of figures in funny suits fighting, which strikes me as awfully trite by now, but in avoiding that, I all too often wind up with a static cover, which may be a nice composition, but which doesn't turn the twelve-year-olds on very much. There's a cover coming up for the "City Swallower" issue of E-Man, which I like very much.

C.C. Did you also create the coloring of E-Man's costume?

J.S. No. Someone at the Charlton office did that. It would never have occurred to me to color the suit orange, but it looks fine.



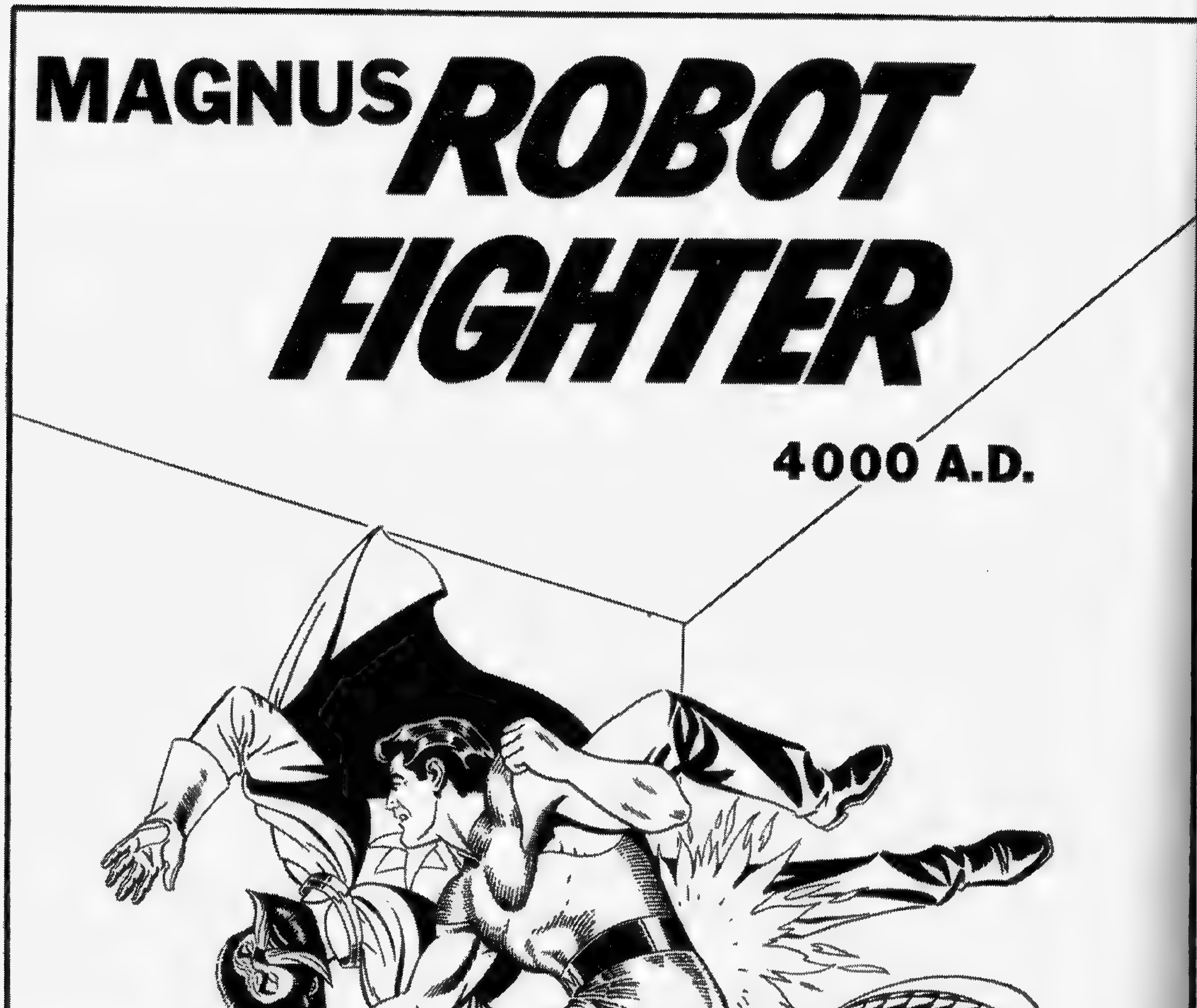
(ABOVE: E-MAN BY CARL TAYLOR
BELOW: MAUSER'S ASSESSMENT OF NOVA KANE. AND HE'S RIGHT! NOVA IS A REAL NICE GIRL!)


"..TOUGH LITTLE BROAD.."? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
OH YEAH, YOU'RE FROM OUTER SPACE. I FORGOT. IT MEANS SHE'S A REAL NICE GIRL.

ALL CHARACTERS DEPICTED IN THIS ARTICLE ARE © CHARLTON PUBLICATIONS, INC. 1974.

Interview by Martin L. Greim

Art by Joe Staton and Carl Taylor


MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER
4000 A.D.

Art by: MIKE ROYER

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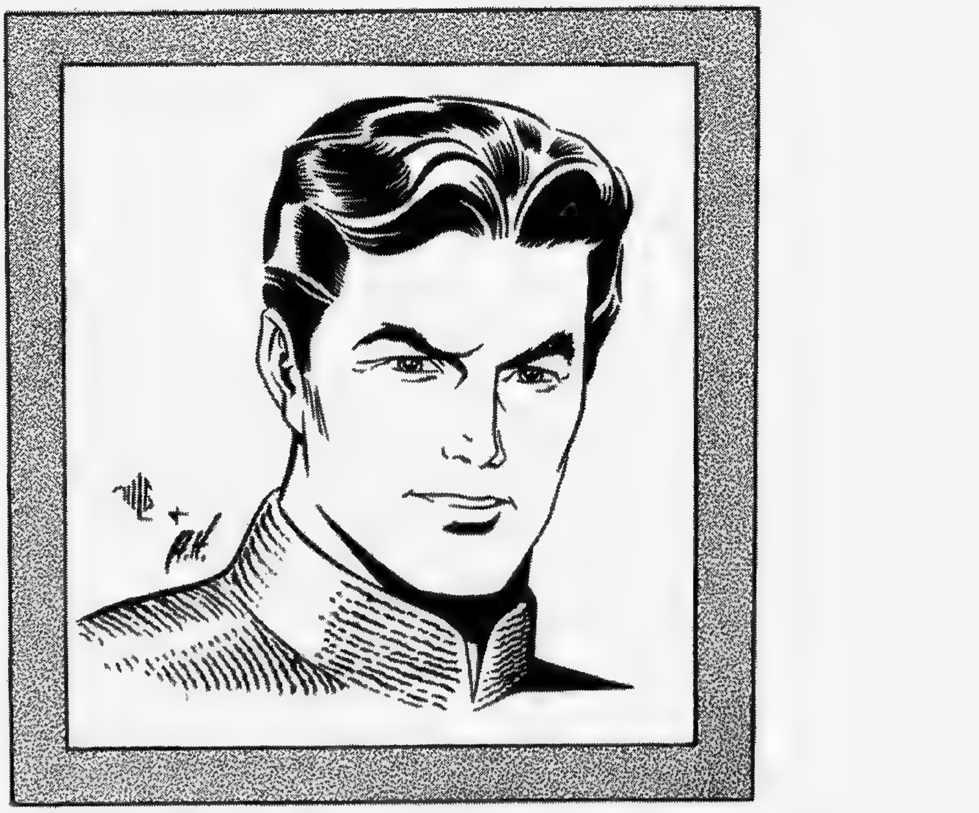
MAGNUS YEAR 4000 A.D.



MANNING YEAR 1974 A.D.

PREFACE:

"RUSS MANNING & MAGNUS - AN APPRECIATION"

by BOB COSGROVE

It used to strike me as ironic that Russ Manning, that romanticist, that master of the liquid line, and Alex Toth, the slashing, jagged, modernist alternated in illustrating the 77 Sunset Strip comic for Gold Key; today, it merely seems appropriate. For, whatever their differences, both have important things in common - they are each perfectionists, men with exciting individual styles with an eye toward telling the story with a minimum of frills.

I think the outstanding characteristic of Manning's artwork is its fusion of romanticism with tremendous control. It combines handsome men and beautiful women, exotic locales and heroic battles, with a control of the brush that borders on slickness, and an economy of design that approaches austerity. Such an approach has its limitations; when a Russ Manning character gets dirty, he is never nearly so dirty as a Steve Ditko bum. Russ Manning characters do not grapple with the explosive force of Jack Kirby's, nor do they move through the rich textured jungles of Joe Kubert. For Russ Manning's world is a clean one; he excels in rendering shining metals and beautiful people. Rarely does a Russ Manning character enter the shadows of an Eisner, or a Caniff, for his world is a well-lit one.

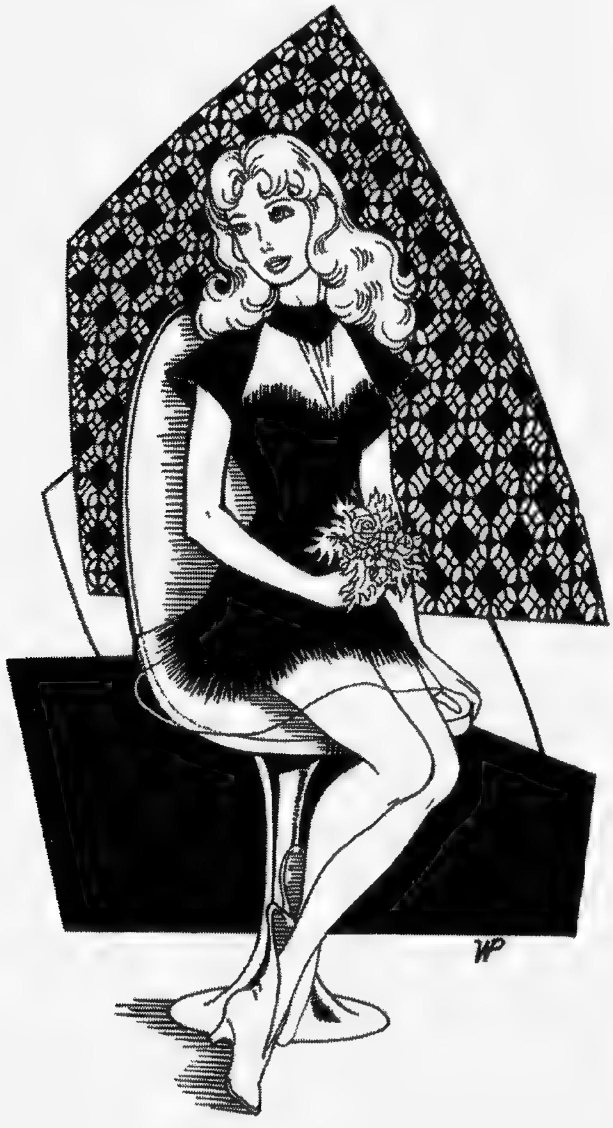
However, Manning's uncanny consistency and controlled line does not diminish his romanticism, but heightens it. In writing plays, Yeats claimed the passion he created came from the fact that the fact that the speakers were restraining violence or madness - and Manning has something of that, in his action scenes. Moreover, Manning's tight control allows him to slip into naturalistic scenes without jarring the reader - who could picture Burne Hogarth drawing Magnus and Leeja having a snow ball fight as depicted in Magnus #8?

As a designer, Manning can be as economical as Toth, but most often he prefers to play detail against simplicity - ornate, carved columns alternate with stark white walls. Patterned hats and cushions play against simple robed figures. The viewpoint is heroic—as much as two-thirds of the time, the reader finds the horizon line in the bottom third of the panel, as he gazes upward at the heroic form of Magnus, or the delicious figure of Leeja, in her incredibly exotic, all-but-diaphanous nightgown. Rarely is Manning "cinematic," never is he ostentatious - special effects and spectacular panels do not distract the reader from his pursuit of the story. Only when he returns—as one always must with a Manning story, does he linger to admire the shining cities, the glittering costumes, the beautiful brush work that forms the auburn hair of Leeja Clane.

Like the best of the comics men - Raymond-Foster-Caniff-Kirby-Eisner - Russ Manning is both a writer and artist. He does not merely illustrate the words of other men, but creates a unity of words and pictures that blend into stories as tightly constructed as the best of Manning's panels. Books of the caliber of Magnus derive not merely from talent, but from a distinctive conception of a possible reality. The world of Magnus - with its talking dogs and neo-animals, undersea food supplies and weather control machines, futuristic opulence and eternal poverty is generously conceived, and faithfully executed.

It may be that before his career is over, Russ

Manning will be hailed as the definitive artist of Tarzan, and there are worse fates than to be compared with St.John, Frazetta, Foster, and Hogarth; but I believe that Manning's finest achievement to date is MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER.



Leeja Clane

Back in 1964, when "The Comic Reader" was the official newsletter of The Academy of Comic Book Fans & Collectors and was published by Glen Johnson, fan John McGeehan wrote Russ Manning about the creation of Magnus, Robot Fighter and received a reply that was published in issue #28 of that publication. Since the information contained in that article is pertinent to the Russ Manning interview conducted by Comic Crusader, we are reprinting it here for your edification.

"THE ORIGIN OF MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER"

by RUSSELL G. MANNING

In March, 1962 Jack Taylor, Art Director, Whitman Pub. Co., mentioned in passing, that the company was considering a comic book with the story laid in 4,000 A.D., and that I was being considered as the illustrator. Intrigued, I went to Chase Craig's office and asked about it.

Chase showed me a letter he had sent to the head office and various department heads. I do not know how much discussion Chase had had with the others prior to his letter, but the letter seemed to imply that the origin of the idea was Chase's. The points that Chase's letter marked were: That comic book readers seem to be buying subjects not possible (because of cost, etc.) on TV. 4000 A.D. would be science-fiction adventure, ala "Jetsons", only realistic. Robots would have become the master race, subordinating man. The hero would be human, would lead the resistance, would find literature, etc., from the 20th century that would inspire the humans. The letter was dated February 26, 1962.

After discussing the idea, Chase stated that they had just started thinking about the book, and hadn't assigned a writer. I told him of my reading in science-fiction, and asked to be allowed to make a stab at it. He handed me the above-mentioned letter, and the script for the movie that had just been made of H.G. Wells' TIME MACHINE. Whitman had done the comic book adaptation of that movie (illoed by Al Toth), and Chase stated that that format was along the lines he had been considering, only with Robots. I said that my first impression would be to make the 4000 A.D. hero a TARZAN of the future...man at his simplest. Chase said it sounded good and to 'op to it! I headed for the nearest beer and relaxed in a glow of euphoria...a whole, brand-new hero and world to create...almost carte blanc! MAN!

Shortly, I submitted a two page layout, describing the world of 4000 A.D., and the hero, as I pictured and thought of them. I personally rejected the world as TIME MACHINE showed it...too wishy-washy... and instead, pictured it much as the comic book shows it now. But the hero, still a Tarzan of the future, had a gimmick...a great stone hammer, slung at his waist, which he used to overpower robots. Had THOR (Marvel) been originated then? At any rate, I hadn't seen it at that time. The names I submitted were HAMMER...MANN...and MAGNUS (this latter inspired mostly by MAXIMUS, in Mary Perkins, ON STAGE strip). Chase, and his assistant, Zetta DeVoe, went over my layout, made suggestions and changes, and chose MAGNUS as the new hero's name.

I then submitted a synopsis for a 27 page script, which Chase, Zetta and I, in conference, went over thoroughly. I was given the go-ahead to write the actual script, and did so. Again, Chase and Zetta tore into it, and made suggestions that, when rewritten into the script, did wonders for it. Then came the day when they said it was ready for illustration.

I had submitted costume and character studies to Chase, and these boiled down to two...a pair of trunks, red, of the material his whole suit is now, and a pair of soles that stuck to the bottom of his feet (no straps), and nothing else.

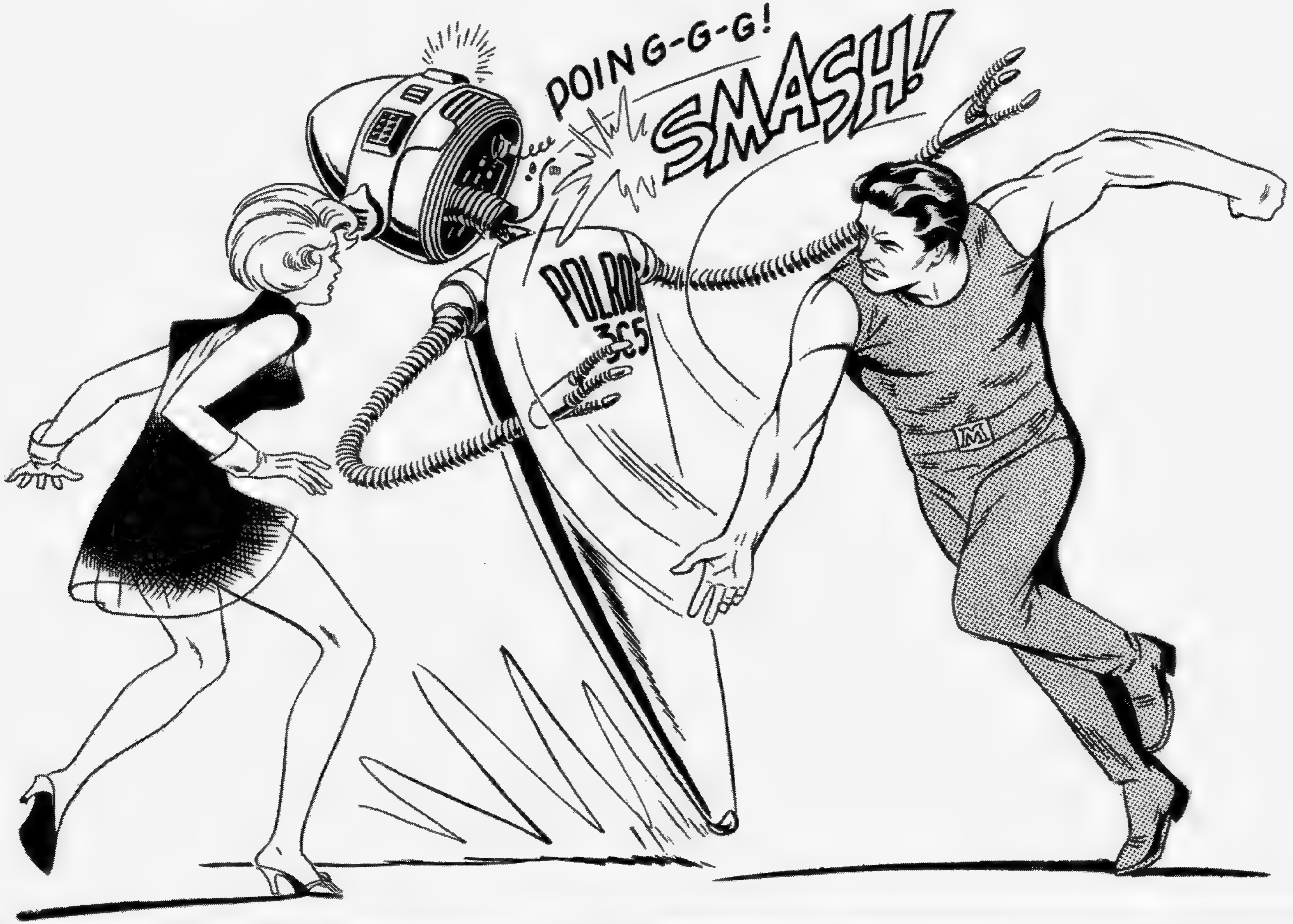
The second costume was a sleeveless jump-suit like everyone else wears in the book. We chose the trunks, as being more distinctive and simple. I then illoed the whole 27 pages, with Magnus in a pair of metal-mesh trunks and strapless sandals.

The artwork went back east, and bounced back with a request to put some clothes on the guy. Tarzan could go around bare-chested because of the Jungle (I guess), but not Magnus! Among the designs for costume I then submitted was the one Magnus now wears EXCEPT that I had indicated blue-black boots. Obviously, the red suit was the one chosen, and I went through the entire artwork, putting Magnus into ceramic-durium. In the margin of the first page artwork, I made color notes to the colorist, calling for red on the suit, red-brown on his hair...and, figuring that no colorist needed a color note to know that boots are either blue-black, or dark brown, I made no suggestions for boot color. Hence...no boot color!

Ah, yes, I see I forgot the hammer! In writing the synopsis, I discussed the new hero with Dodie, wife, help-mate, and she suggested doing away with the kookie hammer, and maybe having him karate the robots, or leap up on their shoulders and UNSCREW their heads! I laughed deprecatingly at the unscrew bit, and sneakily adopted her superb "bare hand against robot metal" idea...and must certainly give her credit for what I feel is surely one of the deepest felt reasons for reader association with the Robot Fighter.

I suspect that an absolutely one-man creation is an extreme rarity, and certainly Magnus is not one of the items...quite a number of us worked to hone Magnus into the more or less consistent fellow he is. One more person also added a fine bit...

THE ART DEPICTED BELOW, BY RUSS MANNING, IS THE SECOND OF THE TWO ORIGINAL CONCEPTS SUBMITTED TO CHASE CRAIG FOR THE COSTUME OF MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER. THE JUMP-SUIT WAS TO BE RED AND, AS YOU CAN SEE, LEEJA'S HAIR WAS TO BE MUCH SHORTER.


POING-G-G!
SMASH!
POLRO
365
M

Jess Marsh, at a dinner party one evening, suggested the train of thought that led to the human-brain computer in the first book. And still unknown: the name of the colorist who digs white boots!

When Bob Cosgrove and I decided to do an article on MAGNUS, we approached Russ Manning for an interview that would enhance the piece you've just read. He graciously consented and provided us with answers to the following questions.

INTERVIEW:

C.C. If I could begin with a few questions on your own statement on Magnus's creation....At the time you first contacted Chase Craig about the Magnus book, how fully developed was the Magnus concept?

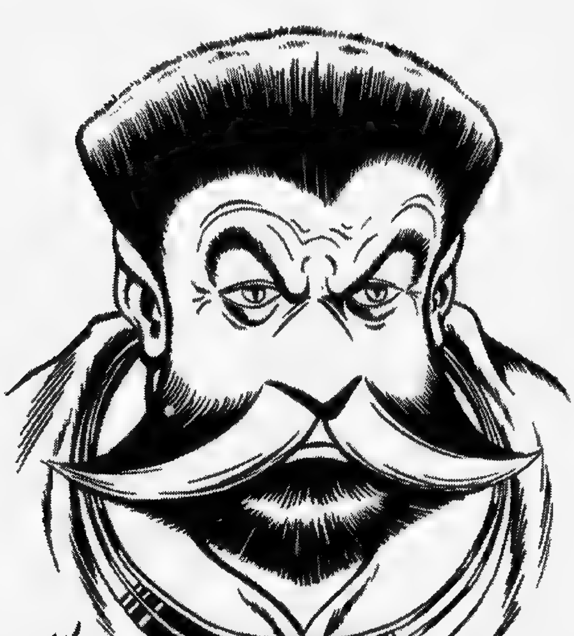
R.M. As I stated in my account of Magnus's conception years ago in Glenn Johnson's newszine, Chase Craig (Editor, Western Publishing Co.) gave me a copy of a letter he had written, dated Feb. 1962, setting forth his idea for a comic book dealing with 4,000 A.D. This letter was the foundation for Magnus. When Chase read my account in Glenn's fanzine, his only comment was to state that the ideas in the letter were his own. I had stated in the article that the letter implied the ideas were Chase's...a distinction I had made because of my uncertainty...which Chase completely removed.

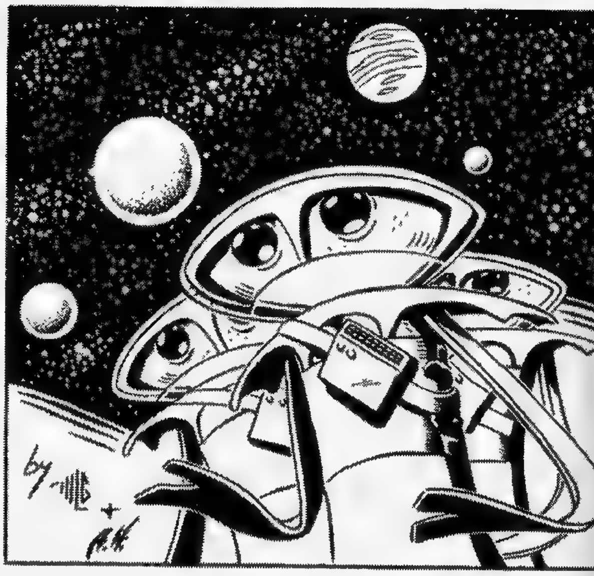
Besides noting some reasons for doing such a comic book, which I feel remain the company's private business, Chase's letter makes the following points about the proposed 4,000 A.D. mag:

> It would be a "realistic" science-fiction adventure.
> Mankind has become subordinate, virtually enslaved, by a race of mechanical robot men. Originally created by humans, the robots improved themselves, becoming the master race.
> There would be a "chief" robot...a robot-to-end-all-robots...practically invincible.
> The hero would be a human who would resist, who finds inspiration in the literature and lives of the past (Washington, Lincoln, etc.)

As you can see, the basic tenets of Magnus are all there. The major change that I affected, I believe, was the alteration of the background of the robot threat; from simple "bad-guy" domination, to a more sophisticated "too much reliance on machines."

Xyrkol





The Aliens

Chase's plan to use robot villains remained...but I suggested the necessity of most of the robot evilness being the result of HUMAN perversion of them...or some other logical cause. Robots, being machines, would logically be no more capable of evil than this typewriter...but the human manipulating it is. This more realistic background for the stories helped their success, I'm sure. However, the man-versus-machine thrust of the comic was Chase's idea...and this is surely the main reason the comic appealed to so many people at that time.

C.C. Had any other artists than yourself expressed interest in the strip?

R.M. I never heard of any. Of course, I heard about the possibility of the comic being done, very early in its gestation, and got in on the ground floor...writing and drawing it into creation.

C.C. Your initiative in seeking the assignment suggests a personal interest in the Science Fiction genre. Is this true, and if so, were any SF books particularly influential in developing Magnus? The robots are often compared with Asimov's. One fellow, I recall, even wrote in and took you to task because your Robots did not obey Asimov's three Robotic Laws.

R.M. I was very heavily into reading SF and Fantasy all through high school and Jr. College (the 1940's); surely one of the very best periods for that literature. I still have all the Astoundings and most of the other pulps I bought at the time...and reread many while creating and working on Magnus. Asimov and Van Vogt were, and are, very high on any list of writers germinal to all SF, including my own.

C.C. Do you have a favorite story of the tales you wrote?

R.M. Not really. But there are several I feel are sub-standard, including the last couple I did.

C.C. Concerning that very first story, there seemed to be a degree of control on the part of the robots, and an attitude of docility among the humans, that was unmatched in all of the subsequent ones. How did this come about?

R.M. The first book incorporated more of Chase's original wishes for the series, as well as the ideas he and I worked out together, than did any of the following issues. Of course, other writers did numbers 2,3,4, and so forth, and while both Chase and I worked their stories over, trying for consistency, the basic concept became progressively generalized and easier for other writers to grasp. Then, when the comic book took off in popularity, the refinements didn't seem so important.

C.C. There seemed to be an attempt on the part of the Magnus staff to explore Magnus's world - with undersea, Arctic, and other exotic sets. I wonder if this was by editorial design or happy accident, and if the former, if you ever sat down and wrote/sketched out a comprehensive outline of the world in 4,000 A.D.?

R.M. If I had written all of the stories, the locale probably would have remained North Am and/or space...since the possibilities inherent in just those two areas would never have been exhausted. Other writers brought in the other locales... possibly to avoid the necessity of really understanding North Am, and using it within the perimeters of its original conception. I submitted several pages of written material on Magnus and North Am, before writing the first book; which, with Chase's ideas, "set" the North Am and Magnus milieu.

C.C. Somewhat more vague was the political structure of the future. Was it as you imagined it?

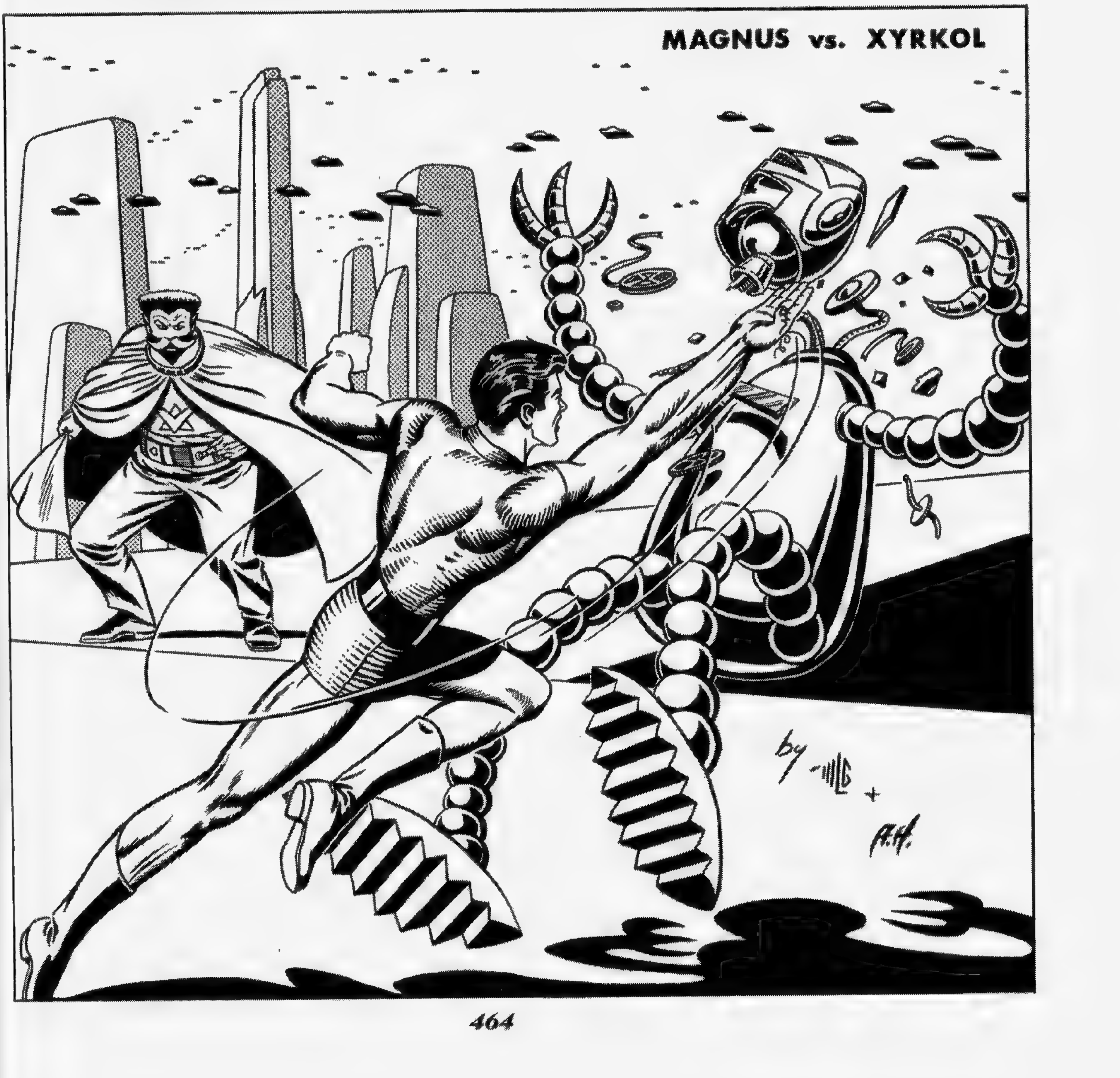
R.M. I'm a pragmatist in politics...if it works, use it, and ignore the label. Chase, however, excercised firm control over political content in the Magnus comic. My feeling is that Chase believed in the absolute MINIMUM of control of humans by ANY governmental bodies or workings. I don't feel that this particular editing in any way reduced the entertainment qualities of Magnus... nor its educational aspects.

C.C. In Magnus #21 (your last issue), Dr. Laszlo Noel recites an incantation to create an Ecto-Rob. The incantation was right out of H.P. Lovecraft. Are you a reader of Lovecraft?

R.M. In my opinion, Magnus #21 isn't a particularly good comic book...possibly because I tried to cram too much into it. Possibly the strain of shifting gears back and forth from Magnus to Tarzan had become too great...and I was personally seeking some magical help with deadlines! Of course I had read Lovecraft, and his unique, strong mythos made a great impression on me. Noel's incantation is a tribute to H.P.L.

C.C. Were you often asked to revise scripts, or make changes in artwork while working on Magnus, or were any changes made without your knowledge?

R.M. Most of Chase's editing of my stories was done on the synopsis submitted before starting on the script. Chase (like all editors?) wanted synopsises no longer than two pages, double-spaced. Mine went on for eight or ten pages, giving every detail...with just that much more chance for the editor to find something wrong. The most extreme



editing...also the most instructive...was for "Havoc At Weather-Control" (Magnus #8). Both Chase and his assistant, Zetta DeVoe, felt I had tried to put too many unnecessary elements into it (including Cat People from Space!) and made several other suggestions that truly helped the story. There was some difficulty in doing the early issues of Magnus because neither Chase nor Zetta had read much Science-Fiction, seemingly having derived their knowledge of the field from TV and the movies (very limited in good SF in 1962, of course). When letters began pouring in praising the quality and SF in Magnus, Chase realized that my approach was acceptable to comic book buyers; and gave me a much freer hand with the stories I wrote...and carte blanche to rework the scripts of other writers when I felt it was necessary. Changes in either story or art AFTER I submitted them were extremely rare.

This is a good time to give Carl Barks the credit due him for the success of Magnus. What?? Carl Barks!? Yep! The number of letters commenting on Dell comic books had always been on the light side until Magnus! And with Magnus, they suddenly POURED in! Then, concurrently, I heard at Western Publishing's office, that Carl Barks had commented very favorably to them about Magnus. Barks had always been highly regarded at Western Pub. Co., as he has with fandom, and his approval apparently put the final okay on Magnus and the way I was handling it.

As to Chase, himself...I consider my years working under and with him very enjoyable and beneficial. His knowledge and feel for storytelling were strong and straightforward, admirably suited to the direction Dell and Gold Key wanted their comics to take. Others complained of his distaste for experimentialism; but I found that anything and everything was acceptable to Chase, as long as the total story and its effective telling remained great in emphasis than any tricks or gimmicks.

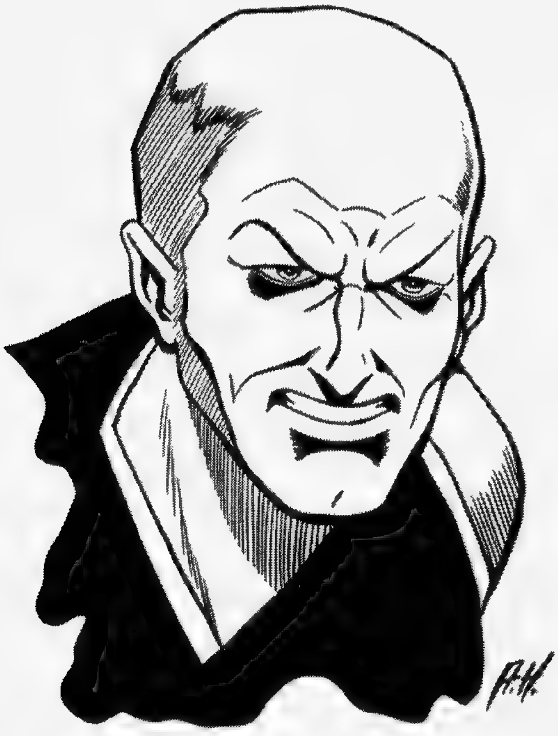
C.C. It is known that Mike Royer assisted you on several stories. Did anyone else work with you, and could you describe the role Mike played?

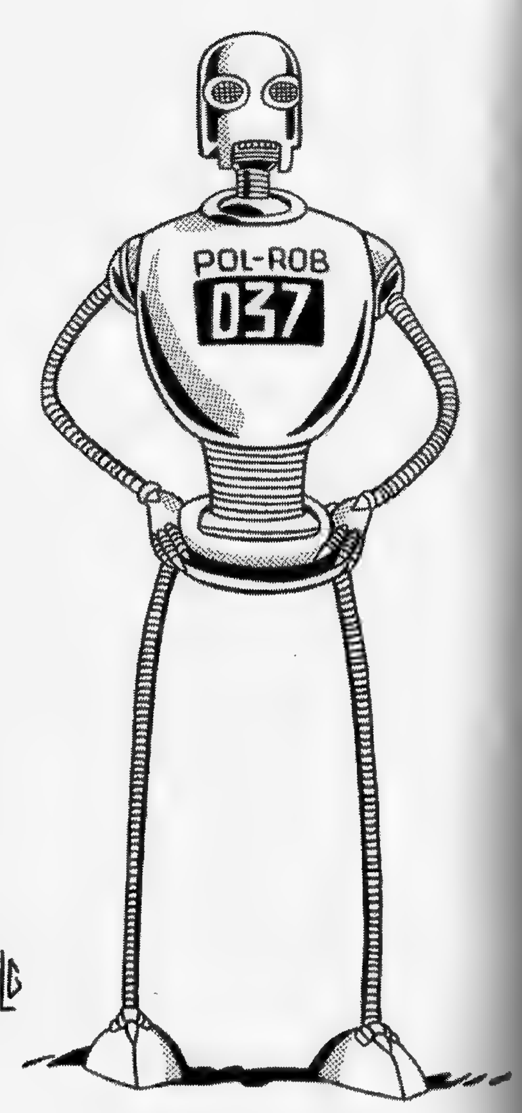
R.M. I commented favorably to Caz (Editor of ERBdom) about some fan art of Mike's. Caz relayed same to Mike, and after some correspondence between Mike and myself, he and his family moved to Southern California from Oregon in 1965. Mike assisted me part-time, while supporting his family in non-art jobs. He learned and improved rapidly to the point where he was making his entire living at art.

C.C. The usual question, but one that's always of interest to fans - how did you proceed in drawing the story? Is there a central concept in your approach to story telling?

R.M. I don't believe that I had, nor have now, any logical, reasonable approach to storytelling. Since my talents do not seem to include any particular analytical ability, I can only put down what interests or pleases me; also appeals to enough buyers to make me a living. I must admit, though, that I have not studied WRITING with the diligence that I gave to illustration. To my possible regret.

Mekman





A Manning Robot

C.C. Do you credit any particular artists with influencing you in general?

R.M. Beyond the obvious fact that I've studied, admired and absorbed every great creator in the graphic story field, as well as in fine art and literature in general, I'm proud to acknowledge the inspiration that Warren Tufts gave me when I discovered his LANCE comicstrip...and later when he did comic books for Western Pub. Co. My work changed, for the better, I'm sure, immediately after his first Dell comic books appeared. In all honesty, Tuft's later work did not sustain that initial impact on me, and I'm not all certain, now, that he belonged in comic books. But his touch was so accurate and refined, that mine seemed disgustingly coarse by comparison...and I tried to improve in the direction of accuracy in drawing, rather than in the direction of, say: cartooning (a la Chester Gould)...or romanticism (a la St. John or Frazetta).

I remember no direct influence on me in the Magnus work...by 1963 I felt pretty competent and capable of consistency...but one artistic influence was R. Gobson Jones (Astounding), in the shapes of North Am skyscrapers.

C.C. Did designing new Robots for Magnus ever get to be a problem?

R.M. No. Only great fun.

C.C. You seemed reluctant to abandom Leeja's first hair-style, and her fantastically sexy black dress, and I noticed you always returned to them. Was this for reader identification purposes or did you like them too?

R.M. Like I said, I draw what pleases me as often as possible. Leeja changed outfits only often enough to underscore her femininity. I once tried to put Magnus in futuristic evening clothes...for the dance scenes in #16 and #18, but didn't recognize him. So he NEVER changed his ceramic-durium.

C.C. Leeja has to rank as one of the most beautiful heroines in comics. Can you tell us something of the creation of Magnus's leading lady?

R.M. Leeja's name was suggested by "Leej" (if I remember rightly) in a A.E. Van Vogt "Linn" story. I believe the universal image of a pure virginal heroine is as a long-haired blonde (Eve, Jane, Aleta, Becky Thatcher, etc.)...so Leeja could not have been otherwise. Weirdly enough, in real life, the reverse seems to be true.

C.C. How did the Aliens backup feature come about?

R.M. After finishing the first Magnus story, I was asked to write and draw a non-hero four-pager, with a future setting. The deadline was very tight, so I used a concept I'd been strongly impressed with when reading Leinster's version in the '40's. So, too, was someone at E.C. Evidently Chase liked the concept enough to ask the writers of Magnus #2 to use the same setting and characters. Each episode was complete in itself until I returned to writing it in Magnus #5. The Aliens occure in the same future time-stream as does Magnus, but whether before or after the Robot Fighter, I never decided. The year 4,000 A.D. is, in my opinion, not a reasonable date for the North Am and milieu I created. 2,200 A.D. would seem more accurate, considering the present rate of development toward such a state.

C.C. Do you recall who came up with the idea of Magnus's robot speech receptor? The device that enabled Magnus to overhear robot nonethereal speech.

R.M. My original synopsis laying out Magnus and North Am is packed away where it is too difficult to check, but since the receptor was used in the very first story, it had to be my idea. This type of specific scientific concept (non-ethereal speech, etc.) was not, and is not, the kind of thing Chase comes up with.

C.C. Did Magnus pose any special artistic or writing challenges which Tarzan does not?

R.M. Are you kidding? Tarzan is a complete, already conceived world...while every blessed button, doorway, speech pattern, hair-do...even manner of thinking...has to be CREATED in Magnus. Magnus was... and still would be...an infinitely more difficult, time-consuming creative effort.

C.C. A couple of your returning villains were Xyrkol, Mekman, and Mal-Ev-6. Was their return dictated by the muse, reader response, or sales charts?

R.M. Xyrkol and Mekman were created by other writers ...but I found them interesting enough to bring them back when I needed villain types. One of my greatest difficulties is conceiving these stereotyped "bad-guys". To me, there are no bad-guys...just people with problems who have been allowed to get out of control.

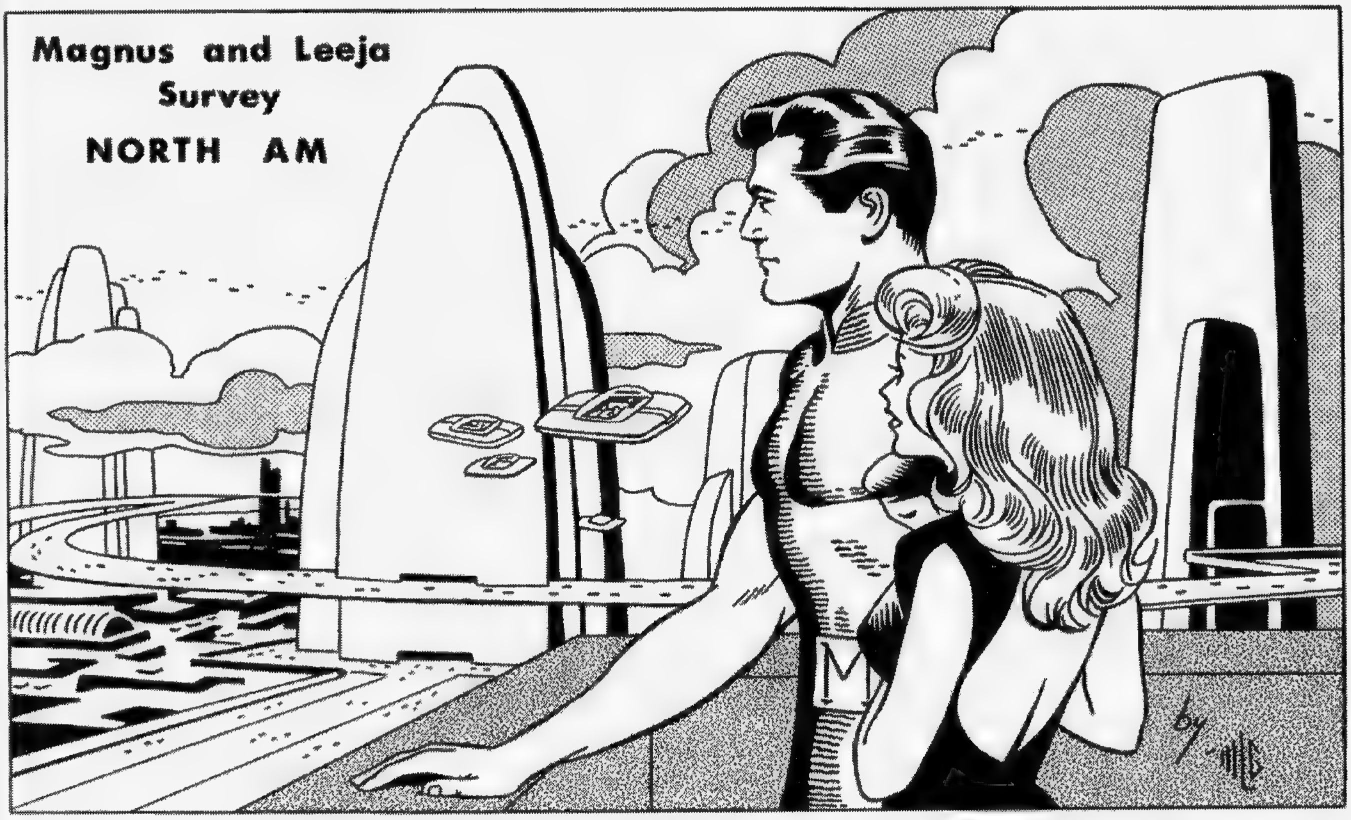
C.C. Once at a New York Comic Convention, I saw a pen and ink version of the cover to Magnus #7. Did you do a detailed drawing, for the cover painter to work from, on every issue...and who painted those covers?

R.M. The only pen/ink cover of the original first editions of Magnus was for #5. The Magnus #7 with pen/ink cover is a reprint of #7, for which Mike Royer was assigned to render a pen/ink version of the original painted cover. I designed, usually in pencil, all of the covers. My roughs were sent to Western Pub. Co.'s New York office where the painted cover was done from my design. I was never told the painter's name.

C.C. A further question on covers...All the covers except #5's were paintings. Was there any reason for that one cover being in pen and ink?

R.M. The pen/ink cover for #5 was done because so many fans wrote in blasting the strange non-Magnuses on the painted covers (black boots, etc.). So Chase decided to humor them, and based on the success of the pen/ink pinup on the back cover of #4, he assigned doing a pen/ink cover for #5 to me. Here was a unique opportunity to do something great and change Gold Key's traditional cover look. I blew it.

C.C. Magnus was discontinued shortly after you left. How much did your departure have to do with this?



R.M. Hard to say. Didn't the entire super-hero fad begin to fade about that time? It is impossible for me to be objective about how my creation was handled after I left it, so I cannot judge whether the quality changed under different writers and artists...or whether that change affected or caused the eventual demise. Perhaps the reprinting of the Magnus issues I worked on, and no others, would indicate that the readers prefer my work...or maybe only that the editor who chooses the reprints does. Quen sabe?

C.C. Is there any chance you might ever return to Magnus?

R.M. Again, quen sabe? It would have to pay commensurate with the effort. I would have no objection to returning to Magnus...there is vast unturned ground there.

C.C. In terms of your own personal satisfaction, how did Magnus compare with Tarzan?

R.M. No real difference. Both are equal in being completely challenging, completely satisfying to my creating urges.

C.C. Besides the first Aliens story, where any others adaptations?

R.M. None of the other Aliens stories I did are adaptations, though SF buffs will recognize the general framework in which I worked.

C.C. In The Aliens episode "A Case of Nerves" in Magnus #6, you have a number of panels where the Hypatomic vibrations are shown purely through the use of color. Was this your idea and did you do the coloring?

R.M. The idea and coloring are mine.

C.C. Did you ever attempt to moralize in Magnus, aside from the "man is getting soft" bit?

R.M. No, though one could make the point that every true hero story is a moralization.

C.C. In regard to Magnus's robot smashes...did you have any knowledge of karate?

R.M. No...and I'm afraid Magnus's robot smashes show less than impressive knowledge of karate. As an aside, I cannot agree with Richard Corben's superb take-off on Magnus (Slow Death #4), stating that the robot-fighter would HAVE to have metal in his arm. Of course, by 2,200 or 4,000 A.D. metalic bone-replacements could be routine...but I work on the principle that humans can do ANYTHING THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN DO. This would be the basic thrust of 1A's training...and the future of humanity MUST involve greater knowledge and use of self-psyching, etc.

C.C. Do you know how Magnus did sales wise?

R.M. I had trouble finding the comic. But Western Pub. Co. was and is very secretive with that type of info... so I have no reports on distribution to pass on.

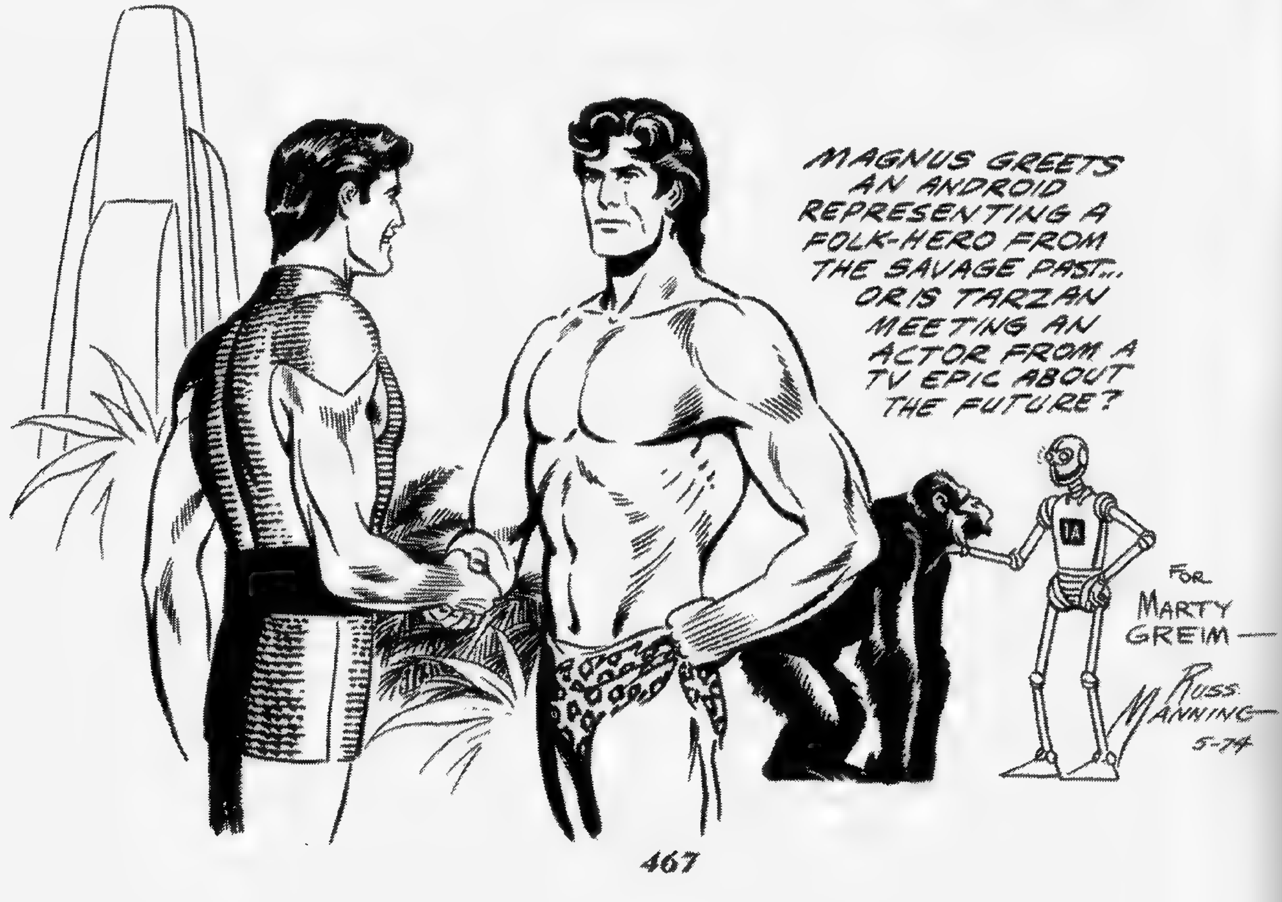
As a postscript, let me tell you that I have suggested to Chase that they commission me to do hardcover books on Magnus similar to the ones I'm doing now on Tarzan. To date, Western Pub. Co. has not seen the value in my proposal...but it is a little ahead of its time...and that company is very conservative...

*NOTE: It is interesting to note some of the more familiar fan names connected with Magnus. RICHARD KYLE, for instance. Quote from Russ Manning: "Richard Kyle wrote a synopsis about a talking dog which Chase did not use - but it inspired the talking dog in my tale in issue #11; and perhaps other elements as well, which I've conveniently forgotten." JIM PINKOSKI submitted a letter and art that was not used in issue #15. CARL GAFFORD wondered if he was too old to be reading Magnus in #6's letter column. LARRY HERNDON wanted to know, in #4, who wrote and drew Magnus, so he could pass it along to his fanzine readers. Issue #18 had a letter from artist PAUL NEARY. Finally in issue #13, there was a piece of art used, contributed by a name you're familiar with if you've noticed the art with this article...ALAN HUTCHINSON. I've left out a few other familiar names I'm sure, but you'll have to check the pages of Magnus for them.

I owe the following a debt of thanks for their help with this article: Glenn Johnson, Dale Broadhurst, Bill Morse, John McGeehan and most of all RUSS MANNING.

Article by: MARTIN L. GREIM & BOB COSGROVE

Art by: RUSS MANNING, MIKE ROYER, MARTIN L. GREIM, ALAN HUTCHINSON, and WENDY PINI


MAGNUS GREETS AN ANDROID REPRESENTING A FOLK-HERO FROM THE SAVAGE PAST... OR IS TARZAN MEETING AN ACTOR FROM A TV EPIC ABOUT THE FUTURE?
1A
For MARTY GREIM —
RUSS MANNING —
5-74

Russ Manning CHECKLIST

MAGNUS

MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER - Check List

#1. "Magnus, Robot Fighter" Feb. 1963 - 27 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#2. "Operation Disguise" May 1963 - 27 pages
Written by Manning, Shaefer and Friewald

#3. "Giant from Planet X" Aug. 1963 - 27 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#4. "Menace from the Depths" Nov. 1963 - 27 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#5. "The Immortal One" Feb. 1964 - 27 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#6. "Alone Against Talpa" May 1964 - 27 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#7. "The Power of the One Thousand" Aug. 1964 - 27 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#8. "Havoc at Weather Control" Nov. 1964 - 27 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#9. "Robot Ghost" Feb. 1965 - 24 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#10. "The Mysterious Octo-Rob" May 1965 - 23½ pages
Written by Don Christiansen

#11. "Beasts of Steel" Aug. 1965 - 24 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#12. "The Volcano Makers" Nov. 1965 - 24 pages
Written by Don Christiansen with rewriting
by Russ Manning

#13. "The Evil Ark of Doctor Noel" Feb. 1966 - 24 pages
Written by Herb Castle
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#14. "The Monster Robs" May 1966 - 24 pages
Written by Herb Castle (?)
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#15. "The Weird World of Mogul Badur" Aug. 1966 - 24 pages
Written by Herb Castle with rewriting
by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer
"Free to Fly" 1 page information on flight
by Russ Manning

#16. "Cloud Cloddie, Go Home" Nov. 1966 - 24 pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#17. "The Deadly Peril from Sirius" Feb. 1967 - 24 pages
Written by Herb Castle
Art assisted by Mike Royer
"Flight Service" 1 page information on flight
by Russ Manning

#18. "Magnus vs. North Am" May 1967 - 21 pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#19. "Fear Unlimited" Aug. 1967 - 21 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#20. "Bunda the Great" Nov. 1967 - 21 pages
Written by Don Christiansen
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#21. "Space Spectre" Feb. 1968 - 21 pages
Written partly by Russ Manning

#22. "Magnus, Robot Fighter" May 1968 - 26½ pages
Reprinted from first issue

THE ALIENS

THE ALIENS - Check List

#1. "The Aliens" Feb. 1963 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#2. "Space Derelict" May 1963 - 4 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#3. "A Matter of Judgement" Aug. 1963 - 4 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#4. "Suspense in Space" Nov. 1963 - 4 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#5. "Forced Landing" Feb. 1964 - 4 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#6. "A Case of Nerves" May 1964 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#7. "The Dream Makers" Aug. 1964 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#8. "An Alien Welcome" Nov. 1964 - 4 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#9. "Talk Down" Feb. 1965 - 4 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#10. "Fear of the Unknown" May 1965 - 4 pages
Written by Shaefer and Friewald

#11. "False Men" Aug. 1965 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#12. "The Time Distorters" Nov. 1965 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#13. "The Day of the Nightmare" Feb. 1966 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#14. "The Conspiracy" May 1966 - 3½ pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#15. "Defensive Weapon" Aug. 1966 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#16. "Rescue" Nov. 1966 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#17. "Crystals of Life" Feb. 1967 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#18. "The Crystal Crawler" May 1967 - 3½ pages
Written by Russ Manning
Art assisted by Mike Royer

#19. "An Alien Phobia" Aug. 1967 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#20. "The Face of Time" Nov. 1967 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#21. "Into the Abyss" Feb. 1968 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning

#22. "The Incredible Jewels" May 1968 - 4 pages
Written by Russ Manning
Penciled by Russ Manning
Inked by Mike Royer

#1. "Captain Johner and the Aliens"
1967 reprints of the Aliens

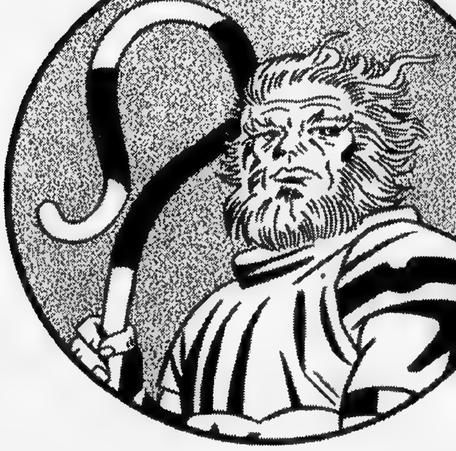
Russ Manning inked all of the Magnus pages he penciled and was assisted on inking (backgrounds mostly) on some, by Mike Royer.

NEW GODS

A FOURTH WORLD RETROSPECTIVE

by

BOB COSGROVE



HIGHFATHER

> GODS, OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT WE WRITE ABOUT, ARE ALL REFLECTIONS ON OURSELVES. WHAT WE'D LIKE TO BE, WHAT WE DON'T LIKE TO BE, WHAT WE HATE, WHAT WE LOVE, AND WHAT WE LOVE AND HATE AT THE SAME TIME. SO, SURE THE STORIES ARE SOMETIMES CONTRIVED, SOMETIMES UNINSPIRED, BUT THEY'RE STORIES; THE CHARACTERS AND THE CAST ARE REAL, BECAUSE WHOEVER'S IN THAT STORY IS A REFLECTION OF THE GUY WHO BUYS THAT COMIC BOOK.
>
> — JACK KIRBY

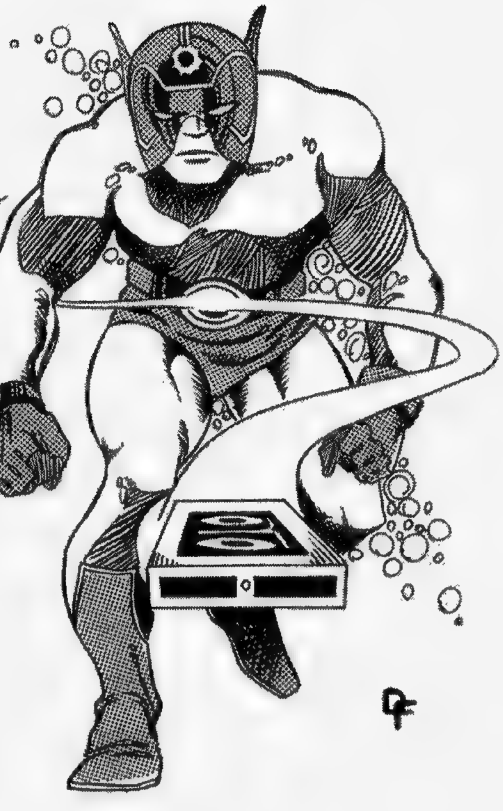
With the publication of *Mister Miracle* #18, the last, lame member of the so-called "Fourth World" series sputtered out. Most will account it a mercy killing; wrenched from the context of its sister books, *The New Gods* and *The Forever People*, the book seemed aimless, Jack Kirby's attempts to give it a new look half-hearted. Since its death, Kirby has coasted, turning out books that are often entertaining, seldom remarkable. One can only hope that Kirby is marshalling his imaginative energies for another burst of creative power; in the meantime, it seems appropriate to assess the success—and the failure—of the "Fourth World" books, and to place them in the larger context of the Kirby career.

In creating the world of the "new" gods, Kirby pushed his fascination with technology and machines further than ever before. Kirby had always loved machines, and had excelled in drawing them even in his Blue Bolt days, but at Marvel, he filled his panels with unearthly, humming mechanisms, exotic cars and space ships, and fantastic guns and weapons; if the story didn't require a new machine, no matter, Kirby would throw one in for added atmosphere and the sheer joy of designing it. No two machines were ever the same—even if they were supposed to be. In doing layouts for other artists, Kirby sometimes roughly sketched in faces and figures, and lavishly pencilled guns and machines.

Almost every New God has his own machine; Orion has his power rods, Serifan his cosmic cartridges, Barda her Mega Rod, and, most of all, Metron has his Mobius Chair, "which rides the *dimension winds* of *time-space*" (New Gods #1, p.8, pn. 4). For Metron, the chair is a necessity, almost a physical extension of his body. Only twice does Kirby depict Metron standing alone, once in *The Forever People* #7, and once in a flashback sequence (New Gods #7) which occured before the chair was built. "We have our 'new' god today" Kirby said, "—technology. A new way of looking at things that I have got to represent. How do I represent that new technology? I've got Metron." (Ibid, p. 18)

Metron, the god of the machine, is not an entirely attractive figure—to advance his "scholarly pursuits," he is even willing to assist Darkseid, who shrewdly comments, "You'll betray us all in *time*, Metron" (New Gods #7, p.11, pn.3). Although he seeks knowledge, he is not wise; he disclaims moral responsibility for the destruction his invention visits on New Genesis: "This war is *your* doing, Izaya," he alibis. "Can I help it if *both* sides seek to use me!?" Undeceived, Izaya bluntly replies, "And when it *serves* your purpose, you *cooperate*!! —And warriors *die* because of it" (New Gods #7, p.16, pn. 2-3).

In an earlier article, I say Metron as a cousin of Nathanial Hawthorne's Ethan Brand, who "was a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study." (Sense of Wonder #12, pp. 20-23)



ORION

Hawthorne's objection to Brand was that he had divorced his intellectual capacity from the moral sense, that he acted, not for good, or even evil, but without utilitarian purpose. Essentially, this is Metron's problem, although Kirby is not as condemnatory as Hawthorne.

Metron's services, first for Darkseid, then for New Genesis, epitimize the ambivalence of a technology which may operate for good, or for evil. Even the Mobius chair, which Kirby says, "can do anything," seems sinister, with its ghostly green glow. (Comic & Crypt interview, p. 8) And would anyone want to spend the bulk of his life in a chair? The entire world of the New Gods is similarly ambivalent: for the technological paradise of Supertown, there is the mechanized terror of Desaad and Granny Goodness; the wonders of the "project" must struggle with the DNA freaks from "the evil factory."

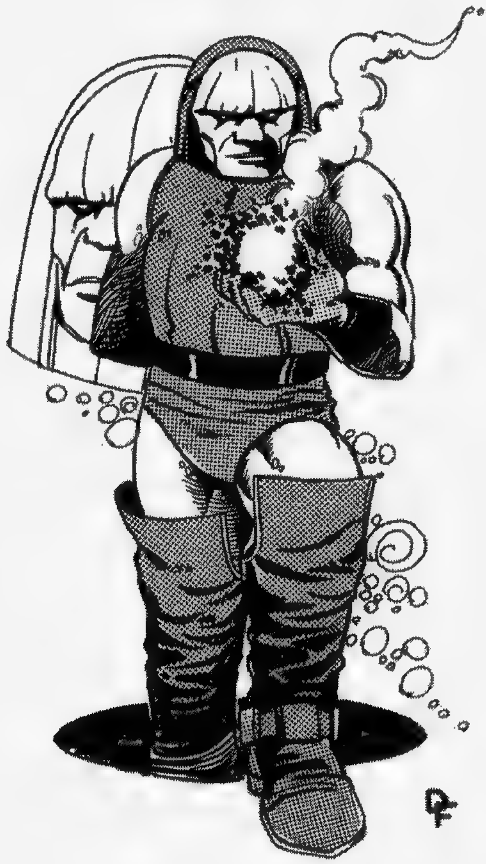
Next to the Mobius chair, the most interesting technological creation is the mother box. Its very name admits the scope of man's dependence on the machine, and like the Mobius Chair, it may perform good or evil, and belongs to residents of both Supertown and Apokolips. Kirby indicates that the New Genesis mother boxes, at least, are connected with a mysterious, infinite power called "THE SOURCE." Apparently, the Apokolips mother boxes are not, however, for in *Mr. Miracle* #9, Metron and Himon both indicate that Kreetin lacks the moral stature to make his mother box work, yet the murderous Wonderful Willik, hardly a moral giant, possesses an operable Apokolips model. Similarly, Orion forces Slig's mother box to self-destruct (New Gods #5), but when Desaad tries to destroy the Forever People's mother box, Darkseid's observation is both scornful and prescient: "The *murder of a mother box*! I *didn't* think you were *foolish* enough to attempt it, Desaad!" (Forever People #4, p. 10) After Desaad fails miserably, Darkseid says, "A *mother box* is linked to the *infinite*! And made to *plague* us" (p.12, pn.1). The mother boxes' functions are varied, and never fully defined, but obviously crucial to the new gods, for few Kirby characters lack them, or travel anywhere without them. A prophecy? Not an impossible one, in an age of "flow technology," where more American homes have television than indoor plumbing.

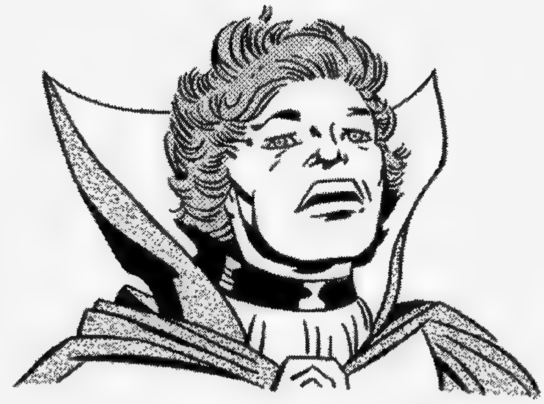
The Media

Kirby devotes a number of issues to studying "media manipulation," technology's role in "brainwashing." The broad plot of the "Fourth World" series is the struggle of the "new gods" to prevent Darkseid, the master of Apokolips, from obtaining "the anti-life equation," a psychic power that enables its posessor to impose his will on the minds of others. Darkseid's goal is thought control, and while seeking the anti-life equation, he utilizes less sophisticated, but effective measures to control the citizens of earth, just as he dominates Apokolips.

Chief general in Darkseid's thought-control army is Glorious Godfrey, a huckster, a super-pitchman aided by a sinister organ whose unearthly chords whip emotions to a frenzy, and sells his listeners freedom from responsibility: "Judge others! Enslave others! Kill others!" (Forever People #3, p. 3.) Nothing is wrong, if done for Darkseid. Godfrey's "Justifiers" obviously suggest Hitler's storm troopers, burning libraries, defacing the property of minorities, beating up women and children; indeed, Kirby begins Forever People #3 with a quotation from Hitler. On a more satirical levil, however, Godfrey's name, his rooster-red hair and features, and his philosophy ("inventive selling" Forever People #3, p.21) all recall the golden boy of radio, Arthur Godfrey. One's reaction to Glorious, who does everything save fire Julius LaRosa for "lack of humility," depends, I suppose, on one's opinion of "the man who can sell anything." I stand with Kirby, and the late George Frazier, who observed that Godfrey was possibly "the only

DARKSEID





GLORIOUS GODFREY

man who could do a Crest commercial and make tooth decay look positively attractive."

All of Godfrey's mechanical paraphernalia, no matter how helpful, how exotic and visually exciting, ultimately depend on human will. Godfrey can push, nudge, provide excuses, but Kirby insists that the individual still makes his own choices. At one point, after Godfrey has dispatched his minions on a mission of destruction, a follower asks him about the source of his power: "They're really eager to destroy! What's the secret, Godfrey? The helmet? The uniform? The creed??" (Forever People #6, p.4, pn. 5) And Godfrey replies: "Earthmen are given all those things at birth!! I merely justify their readiness to use them!! That's why they love me!!!" (Forever People #6, p. 4, pn.5)

The theme of thought control runs throughout the "Fourth World" books, and interweaves with Kirby's old interest in groups vs. individuals, and the loneliness of individual choice. Before returning to those themes, however, it is necessary to examine the type of characters who stride through Kirby's new universe.

Morals

The moral alignments of the "Fourth World" are simpler than those of the Marvel world. At Marvel, Thor might team up with the living planet to fight the villainous Galactus this month, and team up with the noble Galactus to battle the threat of the living planet the following month; today's super-villain might well be tomorrow's Avenger. In the "Fourth World" there are only two sides, good, represented by New Genesis, and evil, embodied in Apokolips. Earth, the middle ground, does not harbor many ambiguous characters—most mortals who become embroiled in the battle choose up sides. Only three major, ambiguous characters appear in the series, Orion, Metron, and the Black Racer, but only the latter, as a symbol of death, is truly neutral, "a power that challenges all power" (New Gods #3, p. 1). Although Metron cooperates with Darkseid on at least one occasion, his sympathies are clearly with the other side. "Darkseid!!," he cries. "How I want him destroyed!" (New Gods #7, p. 16, pn. 4). As the war unfolds, Metron plays a crucial part in encouraging the young Scott Free to resist the brainwashing techniques of Granny Goodness (Mister Miracle #5 & 6) and in perpetrating his eventual escape from Apokolips (Mister Miracle #9). Orion, Darkseid's son, possesses many of Apokolips's attributes, a love of battle and violence, and an incredible capacity for destruction, but he uses them only in the service of New Genesis. Even his costume reflects this. In a letter to Comic Crusader, Kirby spoke thusly of Orion's helmet..."Orion's helmet was designed so it would project the image of the vigilant and powerful hunting dog. I felt that these qualities portrayed Orion's true nature as a killer, motivated by noble purposes."

As he had at Marvel, Kirby creates immensely powerful father figures to preside over the universe; Darkseid rules Apokolips, Highfather, New Genesis. In contrast to Marvel, however, these father figures are functionally important. Odin, though supposedly all-wise only survived as ruler of Asgard because Thor was around to correct his various gaffes. In spite of his power, he seemed much less impressive than Galactus, whose cosmic strength served no moral purpose. Now, with the opportunity to set up the universe from scratch, Kirby makes two father-figures central figures. Darkseid is the villain who animates all the "Fourth World" books, Highfather the head general in New Genesis's counter-attack.

Having vested both physical and symbolic power in the hands of Darkseid and Highfather, Kirby shows no desire to upstage them with any "free-lance" god figures. The "Fourth World" has no Watcher, no Galactus, no Orikal, no Ego, the living planet. However, Kirby needs to flesh out the characters of Darkseid and Highfather, and he cannot do this if he limits them to mere symbols of good and evil, battling on equal terms like Ying and Yang. If they are to function as humans painted on a colossal scale, Kirby needs a structuring force which will not upstage them.

To meet the problem, Kirby creates The Source, a mysterious moral power which exists outside the universe, and communicates to the residents of New Genesis through the Mother Boxes, or by writing in letters of fire on a white wall. The Source, says Orion, "gives us the irrevocable counsel," but Highfather ads, "It does not decide! The right of choice is ours" (New Gods #1, p. 9, pn. 1). Further, Orion thinks of Death as a journey to the Source, telling the Deep Six, "if we go to the Source—you demons go with us!" (New Gods #6, p. 25). All this obviously suggests the traditional, Judaeo-Christian interpretation of God.

By adding The Source, Kirby introduces an additional layer of complexity; now, Darkseid and Highfather can function as both traditional heroes, gods of limited power, or as pure symbols, Satan and God himself. "The Pact," (New Gods #7) the origin of the war of the gods, clearly functions on several levels. Most simply, it is a rollicking adventure story, with strange weapons, wicked villains, and exciting battles. Secondarily, it suggests the genesis myth; Izaya and his wife enjoy the tranquility of paradise until Darkseid, like a snake in the garden, appears to bring death, and plunge the new gods into war. On a third level, it is a classic presentation of the mythic Initiation hero, in which the hero undergoes various ordeals in passing from immaturity to adulthood. Generally, the initiation process consists of three steps: 1) separation and isolation of the hero from society, 2) the hero's transformation (symbolic death followed by rebirth), and 3) the triumphant return of the hero. Highfather follows this pattern. After losing his wife in the opening battle, he pursues a costly course of revenge which brings him little satisfaction. Finally, he rejects his career as a warrior: "We are worse than the old gods! They destroyed themselves! We destroy everything!" (New Gods #7, p. 18, pn. 3).

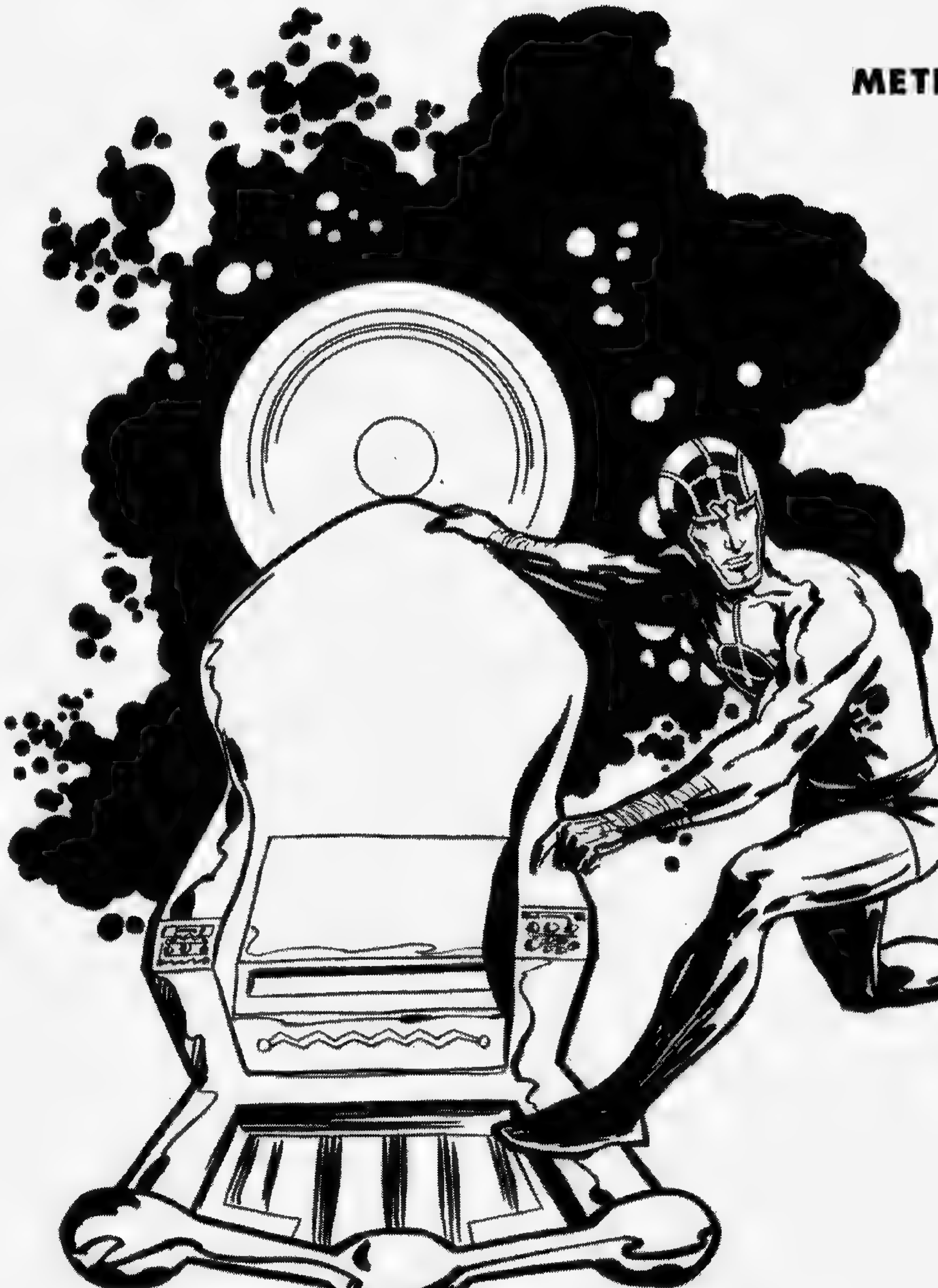
Feeling "infected" by Darkseid, Izaya departs from "these tortured ruins of war" to "find Izaya" in the wasteland (p. 18-19). There, in anger and despair, he tears off his body armor, rejects his war-staff, as the elements pummel his body. "The dry wind rises and...violent electrical flashes twist and stab across the darkened land," signalling the arrival of a turning point in Izaya's existence (New Gods #7, p.19 pn. 6). For the first time, the Source reveals itself to Izaya, transforming not only his inner values, but his outward appearance. When he returns to civilization, Izaya obviously has undergone a spiritual death and rebirth—he wears "the clothes of peace ... and carries a new staff," shaped like a shepherd's crook. His very name is new, Highfather; and his hair, once the dark black of youth, now is the white of age, wisdom, mystic inscrutability (p.21).

Father figures are of interest not only to artists and mythologists, but psychologists as well. In Freud's conception of the "family romance," the child, upon discovering that his parents do not measure up to his idealized conception, begins a quest for fictitious "real" parents who do. Many myths incorporate this—the myth of Phaeton, Oedipus, and others. Many ideal father figures appear in Kirby's books—The Guardian, Clay Duncan, (of Boy's Ranch) and Prof. X all represent substitute fathers for children who are usually orphans.

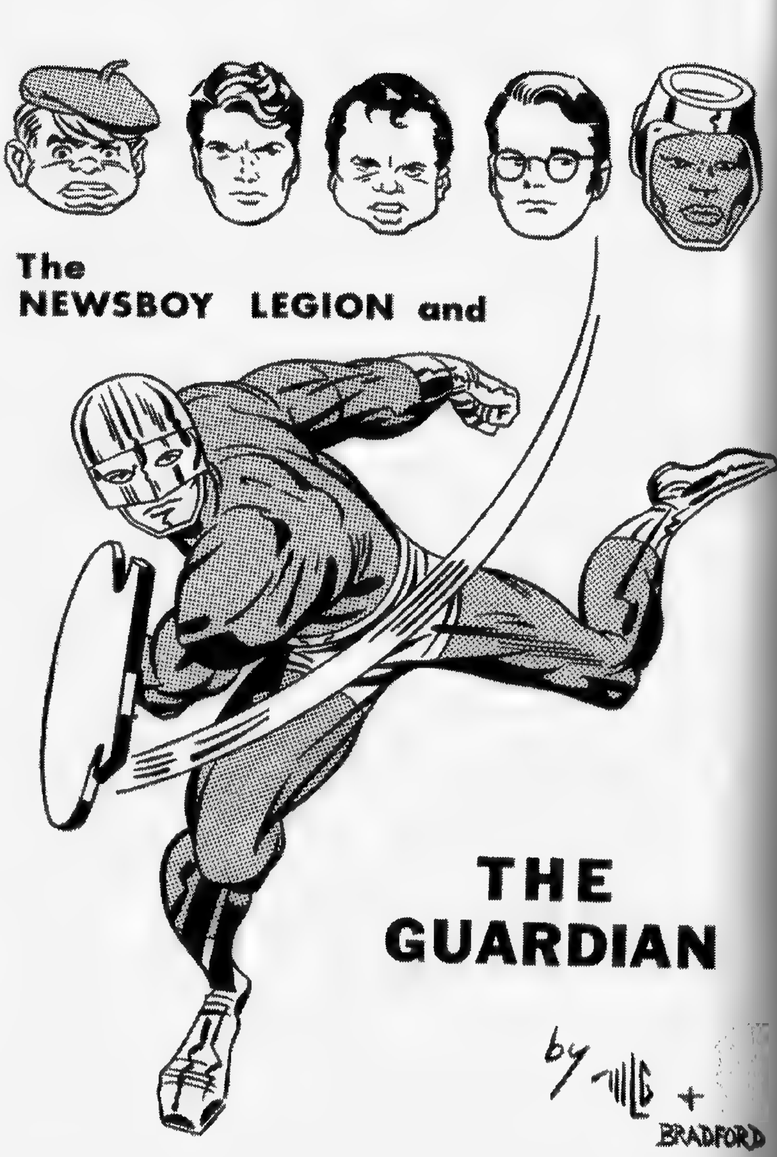
The quest for the father, a subliminal theme in Kirby's earlier work, rises to the forefront of the "Fourth World" books. Mister Miracle--"Scott Free"--while still an infant, is thrust through the dimensional doorway to Apokolips and entrusted to the orphanage of Granny Goodness; Kirby never indicates that Scott Free ever learns that he is Highfather's son. Orion, son of Darkseid, never learns who his parents are; thrust into New Genesis, he confronts Highfather: "Father? I was told I'd find my *father* here!! If *you're* my father, speak" (New Gods #7, p.23-24).

Kirby, obviously aware of the Freudian vein he is mining, readily exploits it; the father/son conflict echos from book to book. In New Gods #1, when the source sends Orion to war with Darkseid, Metron observes, "How wonderously *wise* is the *Source*! Who is more *ready* to fight the *father*— than the *son*" (p.9, pn. 3). Darkseid, for his part, exhibits a strange parental pride in his enemy son's accomplishments; "We could *never* take one such as *Orion* captive!" he tells Desaad, for "His kind *dies* in battle! And in death would look *greater* than a vermin like you" (New Gods #2, p. 21, pn. 2). When Darkseid's two sons, Kalibak and Orion meet in combat, Darkseid destroys Desaad for assisting Kalibak (New Gods #11, "Darkseid and Sons") even though Kalibak fights for Darkseid. Had the series continued, Kirby could well have introduced another such relationship, since New Gods #10 revealled that Forager was not a true member of the "bug" society, but one of the New Gods.

Mothers do not seem nearly so important to Kirby as fathers; they rarely appear in his earlier work, or in the "Fourth World" series. Avia, wife of Izaya and mother of Scott Free, appears in only four pages of New Gods #7 before Steppenwolf murders her. In the same issue, Kirby accords



METRON



Darkseid's mother seven panels, then kills her. Tigra, wife of Darkseid, is shunted off to exile, reappearing briefly in Mister Miracle #8, swathed in heavy robes which conceal her features, "a person of *high* rank" who "bears the status of '*non-being*' and "lives with the scorn of *Darkseid* himself" (p. 10, pn. 1-2).

Granny Goodness, however, is a powerful figure, rivaling even Darkseid himself, and like Darkseid and Highfather, is a standard archetypal figure, "the terrible mother." The terrible mother often appears in fairy tales, as, for example, the Wicked Witch of Hansel and Gretal. She often is not a genuine mother, but a stepmother/usurper, as in Cinderella or Snow White. Granny Goodness represents the ultimate evil authority figure, the super-ego as repressive power, every young boy's nightmare of his school teacher.

Apokolips, under the control of Darkseid and Granny, is a negative utopia in the tradition of Orwell's *1984*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*. All these books deal with thought control, repressive educational systems which serve the needs of the state at the expense of the individual, and a regimented, drab society. As noted earlier, free will vs. thought control is the central theme of the entire "Fourth World" tetralogy. As the mother figure, Granny Goodness employs technological brainwashing as an educational and socializing technique.

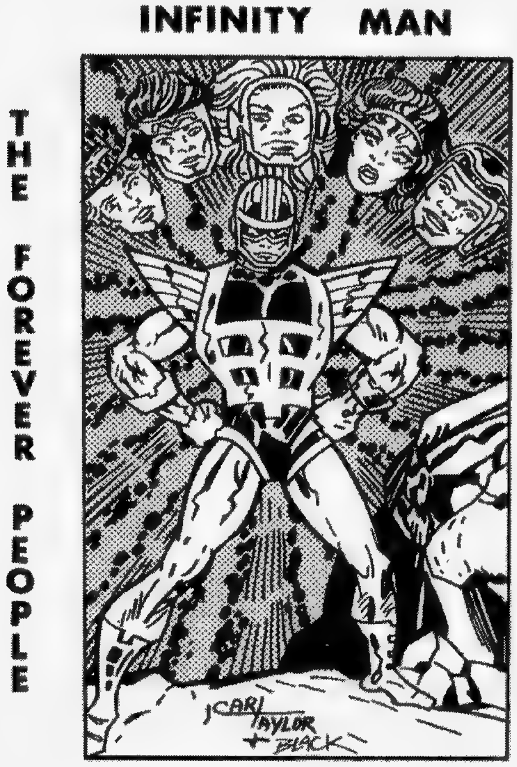
A single two-page story, "Young Scott Free" (Mister Miracle #6), shows that Granny's orphanage shares much with other negative utopias. As in *Brave New World* and *A Clockwork Orange*, chemical brainwashing takes place. Granny feeds her "little darlings" "energy blocks" saturated with "brain drain chemical;" so complete is Granny's control that she even ritualizes the eating process with a "Ready utensil! Down utensil!" drill. Ritual seems important to thought control; the residents of Brave New World have their orgy-porgies, the citizens of 1984 their "group hate" sessions. This is natural, for when people cannot think for themselves, they must fall back on detailed standards of conduct which dictate their actions in every situation. Life on Apokolips seems highly ritualized—in addition to the meal sequence in "Young Scott Free," there are the warrior codes of Kanto, Big Barda, and others. Much of Granny's training employs ritual—those who deceive Granny must stand on "the punishment block," which is "the throne of truth," and, when found guilty, face the ritualized punishment of the gauntlet (Mister Miracle #5).

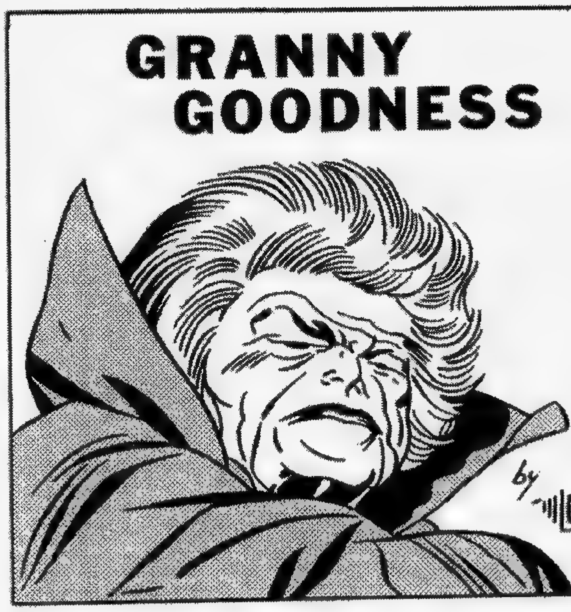
Like ritual, slogans provide codes of action, and serve to suppress individual thought; as the ritual twists human conduct to the ends of the state, so the slogan warps the very fabric of language. As Orwell's "Ministry of Hate" masquerades as the "Ministry of Love," so Granny's loathesome institution purports to be "Happiness Home for the Orphaned Young" (Mister Miracle #7, p. 19). As the young of Huxley's world parrot "History is Bunk" and "I'd hate to be a Gamma," so Granny's charges repeat that "Cruelty breeds respect!" and "Die for Granny—and She Will Live for You" (Mister Miracle #6).

Slogans also focus loyalty on a single, god-like ruler, such as *1984*'s Big Brother, Nazi Germany's Hitler, or Communist Russia's Lenin. Many slogans reinforce loyalty to Darkseid: "You're not a beast—if you kill for Darkseid!" and "You're not a liar—if you lie for Darkseid!" hang in Granny's cafeteria (Mister Miracle #6). Darkseid is not only ruler of Apokolips, but its god; Orion confidently discards his equipment at the foot of Darkseid's statue, sure that no one would dare approach it, for "the statue is *sacred* to them" (New Gods #1, p. 12, pn. 4). Pointing to a bust of Darkseid, Granny sums up the message: "Love *him*! Serve great *Darkseid*! Wear your pointed helmets proudly where he leads! *Die* for him—and *reward* Granny" (Mister Miracle #2, p. 14, pn. 3.)

And they *do* love him, as they love Granny, for in her orphanage, love is a scarce commodity; when she has broken her charges, they still grasp eagerly for such pseudo-love as their strange Granny, clad in her scaled armor, can offer. Childlike, they compete for her affection; consider this exchange:

> Soldier: They are *ours*!—The *traitor* and his gnat!
> We'll be *heroes* to granny!
>
> Soldier 2: She'll sing our praises and give us gifts!
> I can't wait to get *back*! (Mister Miracle #2





p. 14, pn. 3).

One token of Granny's favor is the soldier's rank, to be adjusted up or down according to her pleasure. Like some obscene cub scout den mother, she portions her young charges into animal packs. New arrivals begin as "worms," but then, "you'll become a rat! Then a wolf! And who can tell? --You may get to be one of Granny's fine young tigers! Won't that be a glorious day!! All praise to Darkseid" (Mister Miracle #7, p. 5, pn. 3).

Rank and uniform divide soldiers into types, obliterate the final shreds of their personalities. Just as the Brave New World breaks down to Alphas, Betas, letters of the Greek Alphabet, each with distinctive costume, just as 1984 encourages organizations such as "the anti-sex league," so most citizens of Apokolips are nameless ciphers in uniform, like Glorious Godfrey's troops. Kirby's artwork hammers this point home, with its rows of identical soldiers, heads shaven, sitting at identical tables eating identical dinners as they mouth identical slogans.

Apparently Granny's training rarely fails. Scott Free and Barda appear to be the only escapees from her orphanage, although Barda subsequently brings some of her special forces troops to earth. However, Scott had the assistance of powerful allies--Metron, Himon, Barda--and the tacit blessing of Darkseid himself, who needed his escape to rationalize resumption of the war with New Genesis. As for Barda, she seems proud of her success in Granny's program; her role is nothing if not traitorous, but when Granny accuses her of treason, she reacts with violence, angrily insisting, "I'm the purest, most superior product you ever turned out" (Mister Miracle #8, p. 24, pn. 1). Although she joins Scott, she cannot purge herself of her past; in response to a question from Oberon, she snaps, "Fool! We serve only Darkseid! --And Darkseid serves conflict!" then adds, with self-disgust, "Aaaghh! You're making me repeat the phrases taught by Granny Goodness" (Mister Miracle #4, p. 3, pn. 2).

Granny's orphanage provides setting for the Kirby drama of individual vs. group, group vs. society, and the loneliness of individual choice, which in fact recurs throughout all the "Fourth World" books, in various forms. Now, the whole universe shatters into "in" groups and "out" groups. Apokolips--and earth--are the domains of hostile groups, while New Genesis seemingly offers friendship and succor. But reaching New Genesis would appear to be difficult--a whole society is excluded as "bugs," and individuals who seek entrance to Supertown meet with little success. Kirby makes Superman the first applicant. In Forever People #1, Kirby's Superman, "despite his powers," is a lonely "minority of one in a teeming world of billions! A stranger in a strange land" (p. 10, pn. 1). By accident, he learns of New Genesis--Supertown, and after an intensive search, is surprised to discover that to cross the dimensional bridge--the boom tubes, he needs only "deep desire" (p. 23, pn. 2). Delighted, he begins the journey, but on the way, worries about Darkseid, fears that he is deserting mankind. "There is a loud thunderclap--and Superman finds himself back on earth! And as the boom tube fades, Superman catches a glimpse of distant, gleaming towers...then, like a dream, they too fade, and are gone" (p. 24). Superman chooses loneliness, but Supertown remains a glittering ideal, both the loss and the consolation.

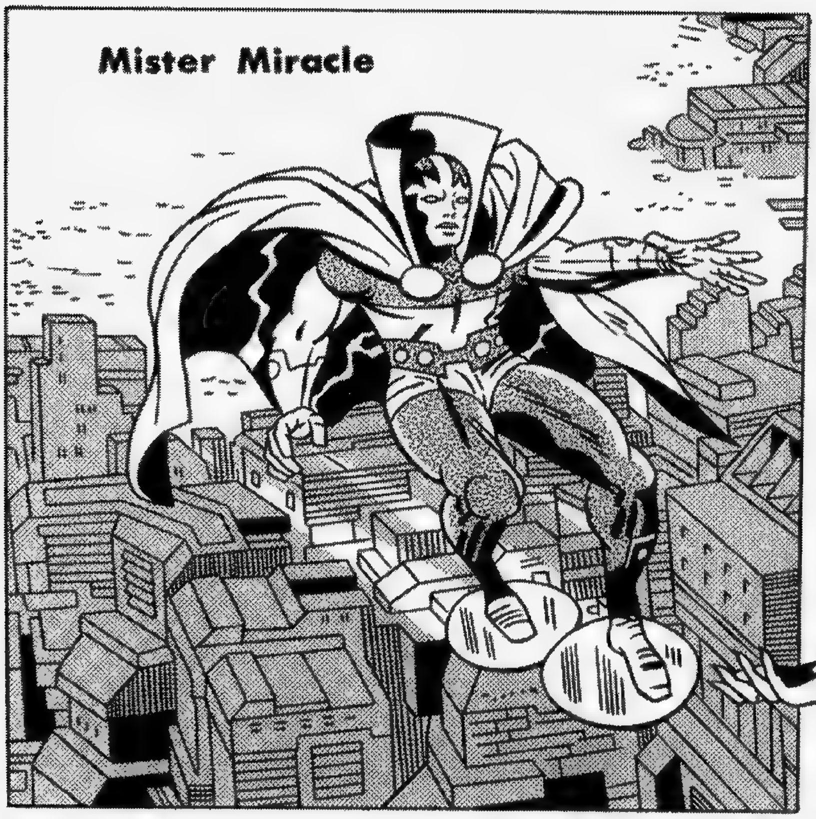
Some time later, however, Superman stumbles into Supertown by accident, and delighted at his good fortune, seeks to serve New Genesis as he has served earth, only to find that there's "very little need for me here!! Everyone's doing fine without my help!!"(Jimmy Olsen #147, p. 23, pn. 3). Highfather offers sympathy, suggests Superman might be happier back on earth, and then promptly sends him there. Paradise, it seems, glitters brightest from a distance.

Even becoming a citizen of Supertown is no guarantee of happiness, or peace. Orion, ostensibly the leading warrior in the armies of New Genesis, is never light-hearted, never at ease with himself, or his power. "I am two worlds--" he says, "like New Genesis, and that demon's pit --Apokolips! --One drifting forever in the shadow of the other" (New Gods #1, p. 6, pn. 5). To emphasize his duality, Orion literally has two faces, a handsome, cosmetic "public face," engineered by mother box, and an ugly, battle-scarred, private face, which prompts Slig to taunt, "Orion is his very own monster" (New Gods #5, p.20 pn. 4). Kirby's point, like Robert Louis Stevenson's in Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde, is that the two faces belong to the same man. Orion is an everyman--moving with seeming ease in the group, yet at the same time, concealing a private face; he is both id and ego--with mother box playing the role of a benevolent superego.

Both Mister Miracle and The Forever People are conceptually bound to the group/individual theme. Where The Forever People use the same variation as the X-Men and the Boy's Ranch --the inner group of comrades vs. the hostile world at large, Mr. Miracle goes one step further--the lone individual battling an entire planet, be that planet earth, or Apokolips. Individual stories exploit this theme skillfully; note, particularly, Mister Miracle #3 & 4, featuring "The Paranoid Pill" and "The Closing Jaws of Death!" In these stories, the villain, Dr. Bedlam, lures Mister Miracle to the top floor of a skyscraper. Using chemical means (the "paranoid pill," actually a gas capsule dropped into the ventilation system) Dr. Bedlam turns every inhabitant in the building into a "hostile, dangerous, raving maniac" (Mister Miracle #3, p. 13, pn. 2). To escape, Mister Miracle must descend to the lobby through this army of insane enemies. The premise behind those stories--and indeed, behind the Mister Miracle book is that life is a series of deadly traps, chains, obstacles, and restraints set by society, which the individual, fighting alone, must extricate himself from. If one is to attain his full potential, reach self-fulfillment, he must elude the complex snares of society, be they physical, or mental.

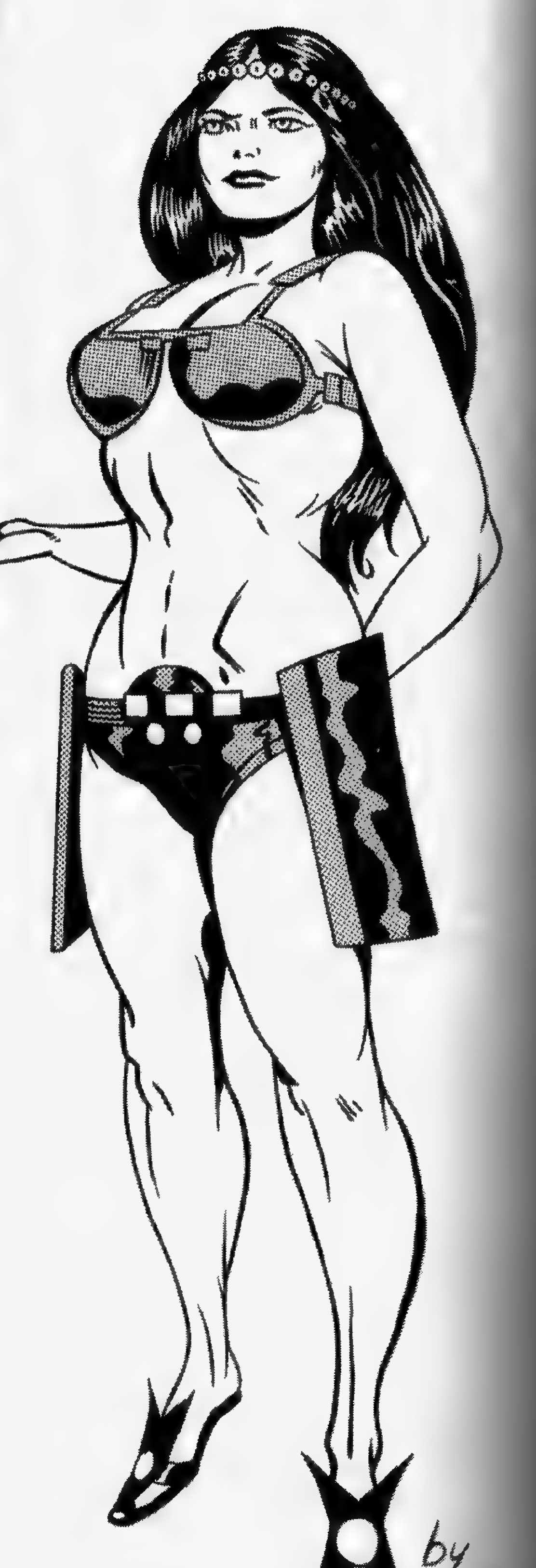
In the "Fourth World" society is literally at war with individuals of tremendous power, fueling unprecedented scenes of violence, conflict, and power. Even when the New Gods have no outlet for their violence, their anger shakes buildings and batters onlookers like a sudden thunderstorm. Orion, particularly, cannot enjoy a peaceful moment--he is above neither shouting a temper tantrum (New Gods #9, p. 14-15) nor destroying inanimate statuary (New Gods #11, p. 5) when frustrated by Darkseid. Similarly, Darkseid, furious at the wedding of Scott Free and Barda, causes a "killer-funnel" which spoils it. When the storm passes and Shilo emerges, he questions a strange figure, "Look at that dude! Have you been out in the storm all this time, mister?" To which Darkseid returns, "I am the storm!"

Kirby's remark that "Violence is just like a well-timed dance, a ballet," may be true in terms of his work at Marvel, and much of his earlier work. One



can almost count the number of characters who died in the hundred-odd Kirby issues of the Fantastic Four on a single hand; so rarely did a Marvel character expire that Lee sometimes cover-heralded them with "Another Mighty Marvel Death!," or somesuch tasteful blurb. The "Fourth World" books live in the atmosphere of death; I would guess that in numbers of people killed and maimed, they easily rival EC. Consider, for example, Orion's fight with the Deep Six (New Gods #4-5); Kirby could have ignited the battle in any number of ways, but he chooses to introduce a whole new god—excuse the pun—simply for the purpose of killing him, and allowing Orion three pages to express his outrage as police fish the fallen Seagrin's body from the river. After killing a number of mutated creatures, Orion tracks Slig to his lair and takes great relish in killing him. He then attempts to catch up with "the glory boat," a sea monster that destroys ships and kills passengers. On the trail, he encounters three survivors, whom he deposits on a raft. However, Jaffar of Apokolips finds them, killing one, just as Orion returns; angered, he blasts Jaffar with lethal astro bolts, striking his form again and again until it totally disintegrates. The shock of the battle drives a second survivor mad. The remaining members of the Deep Six attack, but Lightray's weapon creates a tremendous explosion which kills the evil gods.

The best of the "Fourth World" books—Mister Miracle #9, featuring "Himon," is also the most violent; it introduces a new father figure, and again reiterates the importance of asserting individual decision against the demands of society. The violence which fills the story is the violence of a society that will not tolerate dissent. "Himon," the star of the story, is clearly intended to be Jack Kirby himself, finally caught up in his own phantasmagora, shepherding his characters through the hostile pits of Apokolips. Not surprisingly, Himon claims credit for Kirby's many creations. "I'm a dreamer," he explains, "a visionary! A 'Think-Tank' who pioneered the calculating mother-box and linked it with the Source! I found the X-Element and pioneered the boom tube! —I dream! I roam the universe!! Darkseid wants to own it" (p. 21, pn. 2). Metron pays Himon less-stinting homage. "The wonders I build," he says, "are born in your brain! The roads I travel are opened by your massive perceptions" (p. 16, pn. 2). Studying Himon may yield some clues to Kirby's own character; Himon is kindly, befriending the children of Apokolips, but capable of surprising violence when sufficiently provoked. When "Wonderful Willik" kills his pupils, Himon cooly murders him in revenge. He is unpretentious, given to occasional sarcasm, and not above calling Scott Free "skinhead"; however, he clearly recognizes his own superiority, for his is the strange humility of the artist, fiercely proud of his talents and achievements, yet aware that those talents are inexplicable gifts. Himon's definition of "The Source" is peculiarly an artists: "The Source! It Lives! It Burns! When we reach out and touch it—the core of us is magnified! And we tower as tall as Darkseid" (p.21, pn. 4). God as creative power.

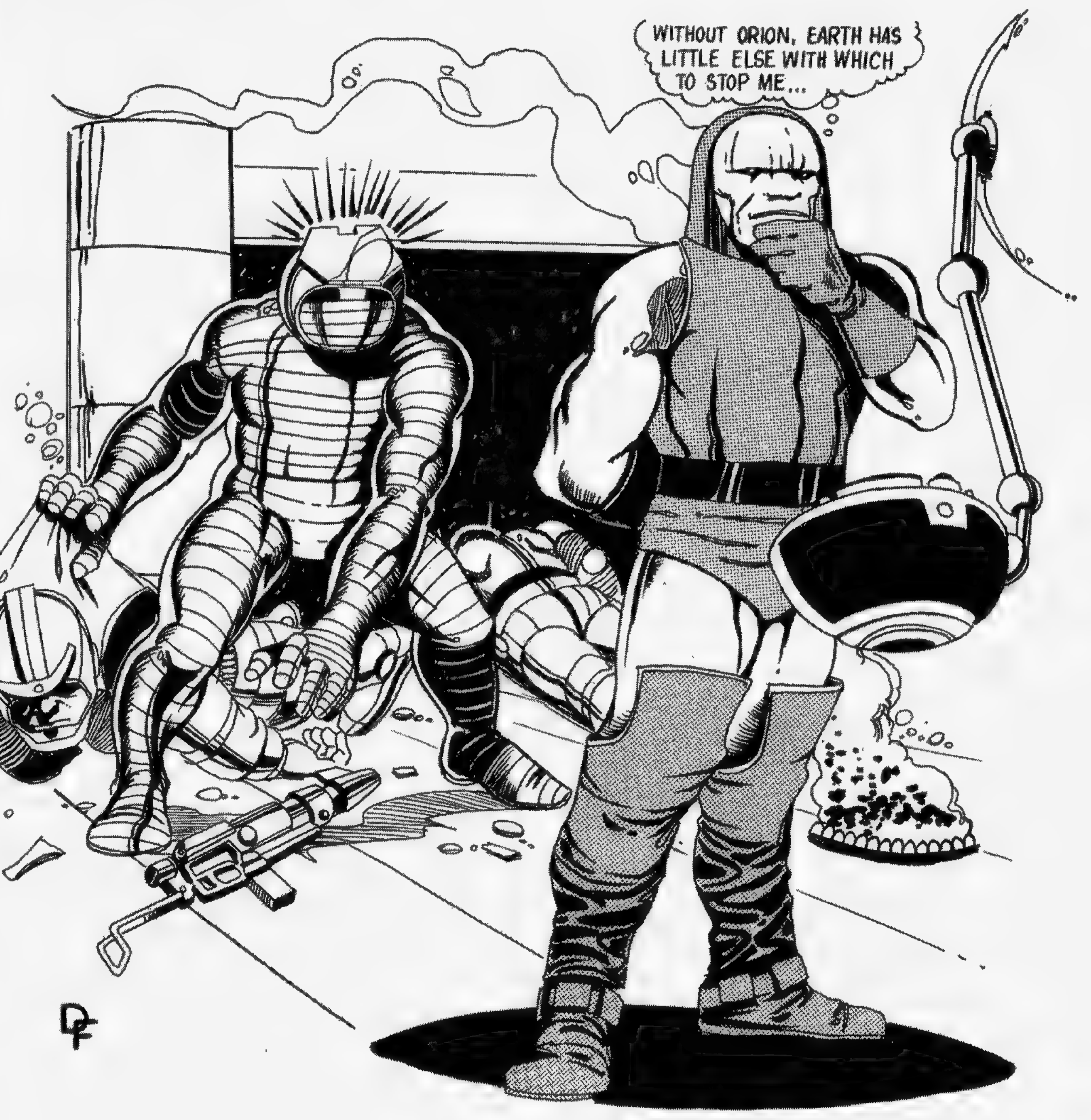


BIG BARDA

Himon, as an independent artist and creator, poses the chief threat to Darkseid and the dominance of "anti-life," the murder of independent thought. To eliminate Himon, Darkseid's servitors reach new heights of violence. The story opens with "Wonderful Willik" turning a flamethrower on a crowd of people, killing them all, all save Himon, who escapes to a secret hovel where he tutors young rebels, including Scott Free. Kirby takes care to make each of the youngsters a seperate personality, particularly young Auralie, whom young Scott Free scorns. "Show me the value in this female, Himon," he demands. "She does nothing but stare into that mind-video" (p. 9, pn. 5). Himon's rebuke again emphasizes the high value he assigns to the imagination; "How do you know she does nothing?" he replies. "Because she creates visions that dance? Auralie's thoughts are beautiful! She creates beauty! Imagine—doing this on a world like Apokolips" (p. 9, pn. 8-9). Suddenly, a mob shatters the door, and Himon's charges scatter, save for the traitorous Kreetin. Though fully aware of Kreetin's treachery, Himon buys his freedom by surrendering to the mob. Delivered to Darkseid, Himon is put to death many times. Kirby portrays three killings, then is content to add, "Death follows endless death! The body of Himon is forever paraded in triumph throughout the ghettos of Apokolips" (p. 15, pn. 4). The body is a replica. Himon, in the crowd, watches his corpse with amused detatchment, laughing, perhaps, at the futility of attempting to "kill" the imagination.

Himon's young pupils are not so lucky. Kirby kills them all, including Kreetin. He has taken such pains to portray them as individuals to heighten outrage at the evil of their murders. As for Auralie, "we found her," Wonderful Willik explains, "—Dancing like a pretty little doll! —For which we gave her a pair of high-voltage shock boots" (p. 19, pn. 3).

One pupil lives, Scott Free. In earlier issues, Kirby had documented his life at Granny Goodness's orphanage; now, Scott Free is on the verge of escaping, with Himon's assistance. But Himon, though a powerful and indispensible ally, refuses to push


WITHOUT ORION, EARTH HAS LITTLE ELSE WITH WHICH TO STOP ME...

SUPERMAN
NEWTON + BLACK

Scott; once more Kirby hammers home the loneliness of individual choice—Scott may join the group, or defy a planet, but he must decide. Apparently, Himon will not even recruit pupils. "I was a fool to seek you out," Scott tells him (p. 7, pn. 4). Only after Scott approaches him, does Himon teach. When Metron urges Himon to engineer Scott's escape, Himon demurs: "You showed Scott the way to me—and I can *teach* him to escape Apokolips! But I *can't* give *him* the resolve! Only *Scott* can renounce what he has here" (p. 16, pn. 3). Finally, Scott does decide. Darkseid, like Himon, refuses to interfere as Scott crawls towards a Boom Tube door to earth, created by Himon and Metron. "He can take it!" Darkseid shouts. "I'll not stop him now! If courage and bravery took him here!—Some of it was Mine! Stay, Warrior! Let me complete the destruction of Scott Free—so you may live with the majesty that is the power of Darkseid" (p. 25, pn. 4-5). Scott, like Superman, chooses earth; and like Superman, to choose is to act. As he voices his wish, his form vanishes, and Darkseid stands alone, watching the already fading images of Himon and Metron.

Assessment

Assessing the "Fourth World" books is a difficult task, for often their aesthetic virtues are their commercial flaws. Going one step further than his sequential issues at Marvel, Kirby created an ambitious, interlocking epic of four books. No reader could possibly fully appreciate a single title, much less a single issue, without following all the books.

Adding to this commercial handicap, was the fact that Kirby had been planning this series, waiting for the opportunity to bring his new characters to life, all during his last few years at Marvel. Apparently, when his chance came, he was bursting with creative excitement, unable to restrain himself from flooding his new characters onto the page. Events followed too fast; books seemed too complex, as Kirby pursued eccentric side paths. "The Bug" stories were fascinating, but their introduction so early into the already complicated *New Gods* books was a mistake—they belonged in issue thirty-five, not issues nine and ten. In a sense, Kirby's own energy worked against him. With Thor and the Fantastic Four, he had begun slow; only when the books were established favorites did new characters suddenly proliferate at fantastic speed. The Inhumans, for example, did not appear until Fantastic Four #45.

One must also say, that not all of Kirby's new characters were successes. Kirby's Black Racer—a parapalegic on skis wearing an absurd, pseudo-Roman, red fighting helmet, was at best a failure, at worst an embarrassment. Old characters such as The Newsboy Legion, sometimes suffered, torn from their original environments. Kirby made a valiant attempt to integrate them with his new worlds, creating look-alike offspring of the original legion, and adding a new, black member, Flippa-Dippa. Only the Guardian, a DNA replica of the original Jim Harper, survived the transition with anything approaching his original vitality. The Legion was an anachronism, a nineteen-forties slum street gang careening through the super-scientific realms which reflected Kirby's new interests. Talking like tenement dwellers, they travelled in a vehicle that might have been borrowed by Reed Richards. Flippa-Dippa represented the series low, and, when considered with the Black Racer, cast serious doubt on Kirby's ability to realistically deal with black characters. Flippa, a scuba diving fanatic, is so enamored with the sport that he spends his every waking hour in diving gear, trying to look ridiculous, and succeeding admirably. And—a minor point to be sure—freed from Stan Lee's editorial constraints, Kirby once again indulged his unabashed admiration for Dickens, unfortunately including Dickens's delight in descriptive personal names such as "Gradgrind" and "M'Choakumchild." In a satire strip such as *Fighting American*, this penchant was excusable; for a self-described "epic for our time," it seemed quaint and—well, nineteenth century.

A few of Kirby's attempts at humor met with more success, notably the two "Goody Rickles" issues of *Jimmy Olsen*, guest-starring Don Rickles. In addition to a creditable caricature of Rickles, Kirby managed to capture Don's "insult comedy" humor style, doubling the humor by tossing in a "look-alike" double, "Goody Rickles," wearing a ridiculous super-hero costume. Morgan Edge, new owner of the Daily Planet, serves as straight man for the Rickles duo. At one point in issue #139, Goody kneels on the floor, grabbing the dead-pan Edge by the waist as he begs for a reporting assignment...Edge thinks, "The solution is obvious. This man must be killed" (Jimmy Olsen #139, p. 12, pn. 1). Good as the strip was, readers might have wondered about the cover caption on *Jimmy Olsen* #141, "*Rushing* towards the *Greatest* Climax Ever

Seen In Comics"; said climax was the police bomb disposal unit carrying Don Rickles to the door as he said, "Tick-tick-tick-tick-tick--Hurry! Hurry! Or this building goes up" (p. 22, pn. 5).

The "Fourth World" books lasted only a few short years; given more time, Kirby might have molded them into his magnum opus, but as the record now stands, one must say that his most ambitious work is not his best. Kirby's finest sustained achievement remains The Fantastic Four and Thor. However, one can say that his work reached a new peak of sophistication and intensity with the "Fourth World", and that some of the individual stories--"The Pact," "Himon," and to a lesser extent, "The Glory Boat" and "A Superman in Supertown" rank among Kirby's finest work. And, although it seems unlikely, there is always a slim possibility that Kirby may one day have the opportunity to bring his characters back and fulfill their great promise.

Until then, one may be forgiven for picturing Kirby, standing like Himon on the surface of Apokolips, free at any time to escape in personal visions, or surrender to the pressures of the crowd, but determined to remain "grounded," creating new images, and sharing them with any who can recognize beauty and strength--in "Armagetto"--or the pages of a comic book.

Writer: BOB COSGROVE

Artists: JACK KIRBY - JOE SINNOTT - DENNIS FUJITAKE
TOM ARMSTRONG - CARL TAYLOR - DON NEWTON
BILL BLACK - MARTIN L. GREIM

All characters depicted in this article are
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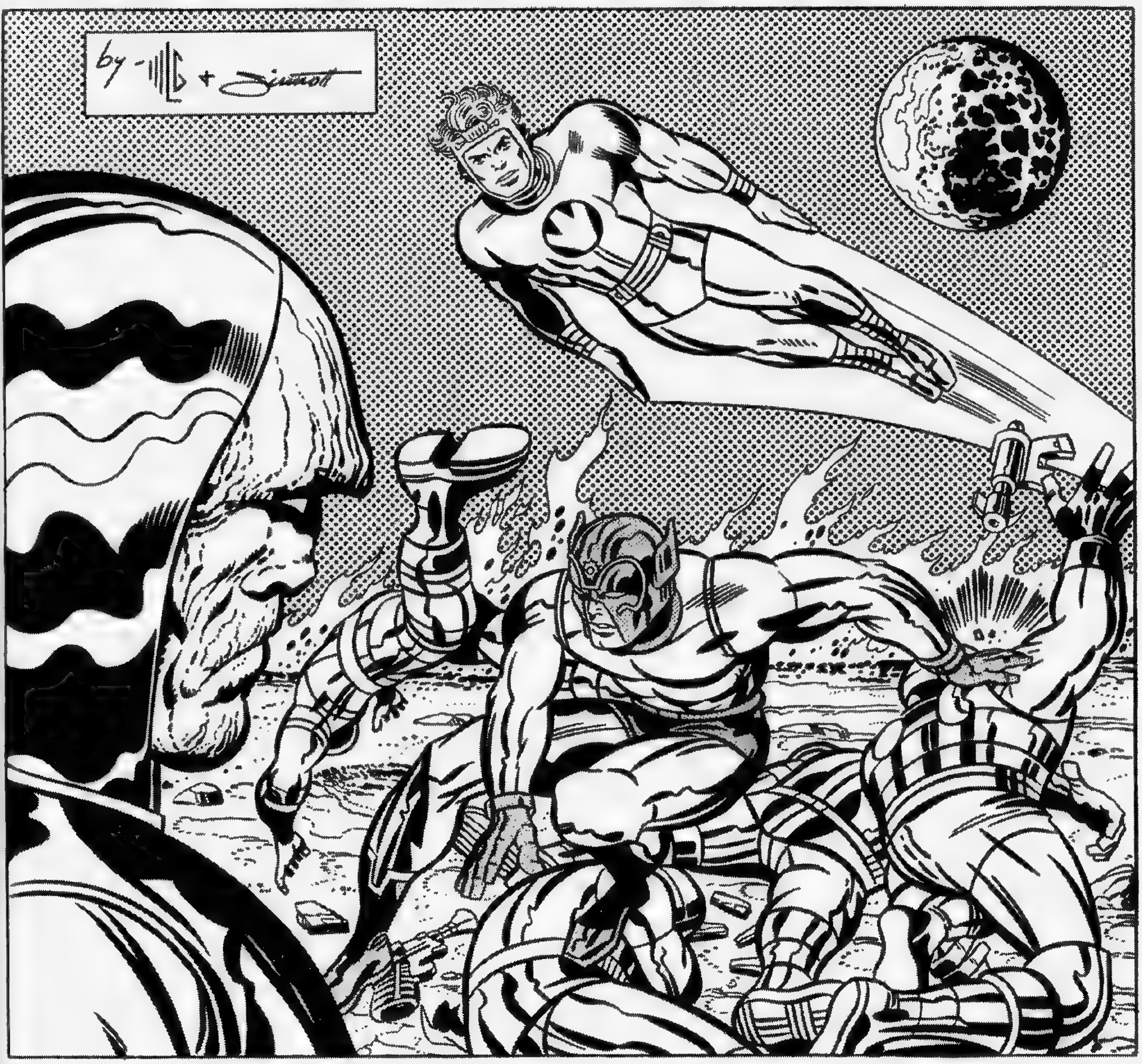
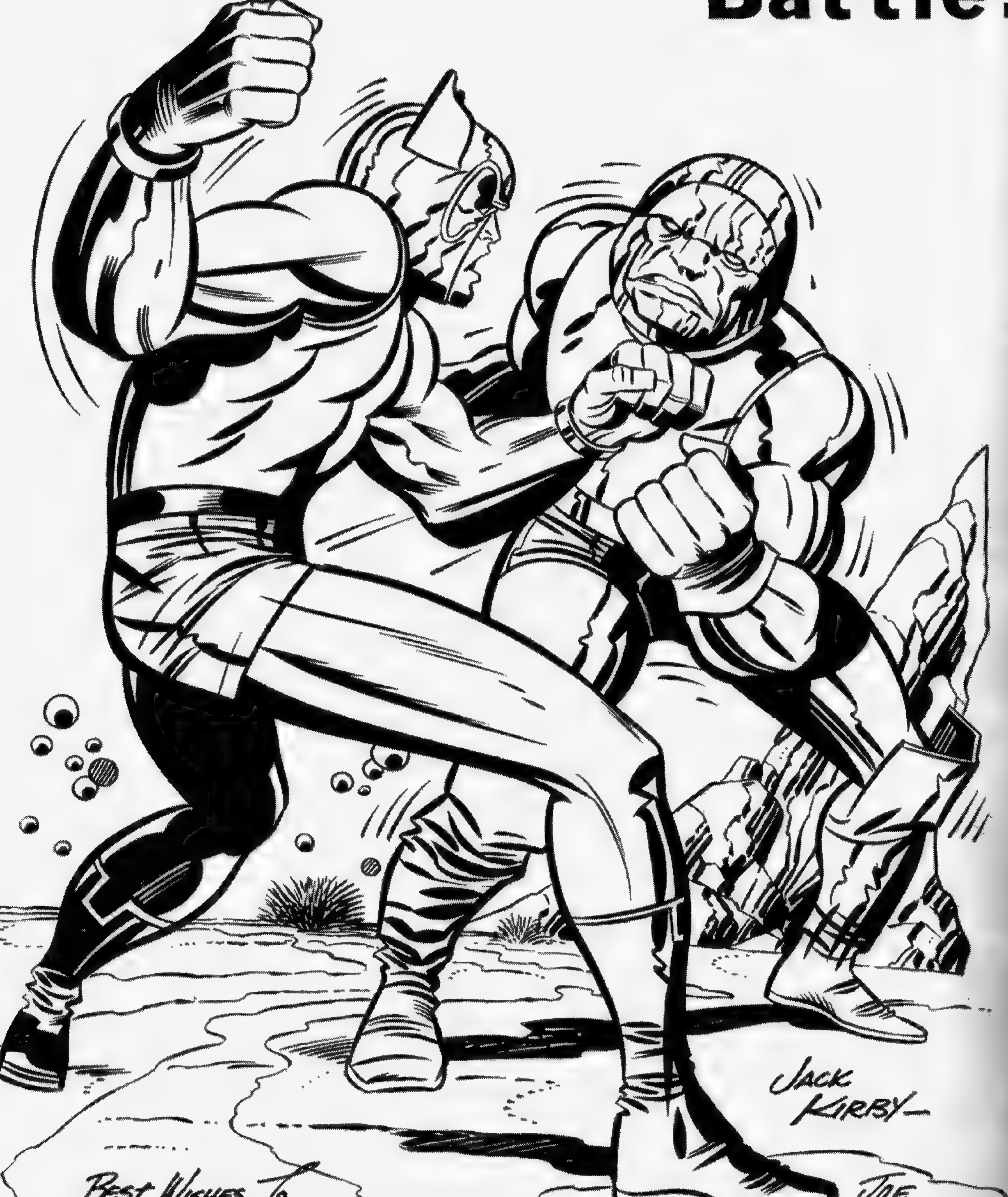
Lightray watches as Orion and Darkseid meet on the day called....



Last Battle!


Jack Kirby-
Best Wishes To
My Pal- Marty Greim
Joe Sinnott

MARIE SEVERIN

Interviewed by
Bruce D. Patterson

CALDWELL '73

There are few women in the comic book field and even fewer in the artistic end of it. Comic Crusader is pleased to have an interview with one of the nicest, talented females in this creative medium... MARIE SEVERIN.

Q. Which of the many strips you've worked on, did you find the most enjoyable and/or rewarding and why?

A. I always enjoy humor, but in the "adventure" area Kull had material I personally could dive into - if I had a good inker and more experience, I think at the time Doc Strange would have been great fun.

Q. Are you "comfortable" working in a field dominated by men? Are you treated with equal respect?

A. I like it better than a field dominated by women. More and more women are coming into comics, which is good. Women, I'm sure, will have an effect on comics. As far as respect as an equal goes...if you act like a dope, fellow or gal, you will be treated like a dope.

Q. What are the chances of a female artist making it in the comics business? (Better or worse than the male artist?)

A. In the past no one expected ladies to do comics. They were usually not trained or geared for it and were exposed usually to cute bunny bodies - then Millie the Model and then Romance comics, if they saw comics at all. Today I know for a fact at Marvel, and I imagine the other companies, it is not considered far-fetched that a woman would be useful. Of course if a Marilyn Monroe applied she would probably get a longer interview than a Gravel Gertie, but if Gertie qualified she'd get the job.

Q. Would you mind "getting political" and tell us what you think about the world and do you have any special causes?

A. I'm not active in any political or local organizations. I read the papers and get mad at just about the same things everybody else does - Vote for different parties all the time - contribute art and money now and then to varied causes. I'm not a crusader or a BLAH.

Q. Did you find it hard to be accepted as an artist when you first started at Marvel?

A. I had worked for Stan Lee (Timely) in the late fifties, so when I returned in '64 or '65 to Stan Lee (Marvel)I was immediately given production and coloring, which I had handled before. As time went on, I became useful in art and also had to become acquainted with the Super-Hero stuff, which was new to me. Stan was great in his guidance - then and now the staff at Marvel will give useful criticism. Because of the crash of comics in the fifties there was a gap of new people coming into comics. Now we have the older people and the younger. The young have new approaches and new ideas...a whole potential of new trends. The older people have the proven techniques and know how and if both learn from the other and the company sees and uses the best of both you have a strong line of sellers. I'd like to add that "old pros" very often have not grown with the times. The ones who have are the ones you still see (or read). That should be fair warning to the young...Keep Your Mind Moving!

Q. I believe you were the head colorist at E.C. Did you have any trouble working with "the guys"?

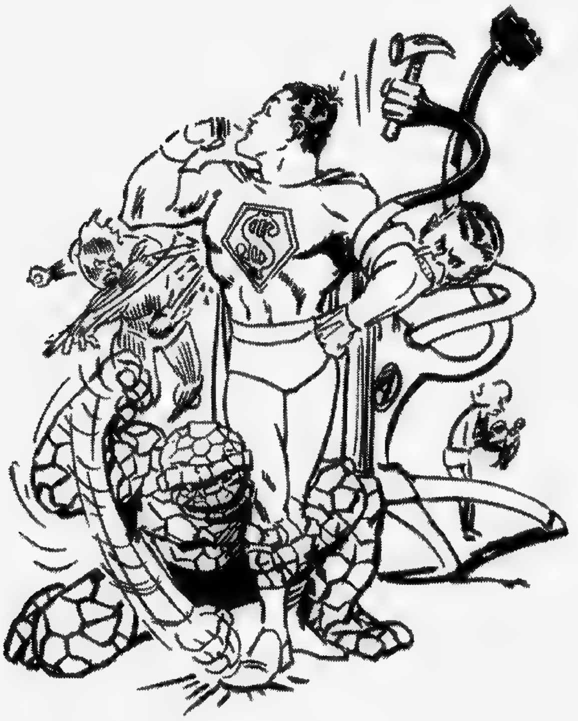
A. In those days most coloring was so awful that E.C. people were delighted to see their work get special attention. This was due to their interest in quality - which they thought should be tried - maybe it would sell.

Q. On the subject of coloring, did you use a different method of coloring at E.C., as opposed to the way you color at Marvel? I ask because it seems the coloring jobs at E.C. were more sensitive (and there's a different look) than at Marvel (generally).

A. There is a distinct difference in color (or should be) for every subject matter. You say E.C. color was more sensitive - maybe you are nostalgic - or maybe you like E.C. stories better. Anyway yesterdays comics and todays comics are comic books because they are colored. The same artists have to approach the look differently. For a black & white they strive for the illustrative look by completing the work in the inking. Much of comics (the colored ones) would look very open without color. So much of the mood in color comics can be influenced by the colorist and they can't do much for a job that is poorly inked (they also can foul up some work with thoughtless color). What I'm trying to say is a colorist should add as much as they can to the story telling.

Q. Do you enjoy your job and why?

A. Well I guess I'm not unhappy. I've been there 9 or 10 years. Why? The work on the whole is what I like to do. No job is heaven. You have to work but I've found they pay me for doing what I like and most of the staff is insane.



Sketch for CRAZY when it was a comic book.

Q. Do you feel your "creativity" is hampered by the fast-paced work schedules?

A. Depends. Sometimes the schedule is the only thing that spurs you on - or it can hold you back because of time on adding that extra thought which makes the job more gratifying. Some artists (writers) are gifted with a direct, forceful grasp of the story and work faster. Others are specialists which is so hard if you have no real interest in the subject - (I hate drawing tanks and modern buildings). All things considered schedules are a fact, a necessity. If you have a hang up on a story, or are in love with it, are under too much pressure by taking on more work than you can handle, then schedules are hideous.

Q. Do you prefer the dramatic-type art or the funny stuff you did for "Not-Brand-Ecch?"

A. It's like a two-sided coin. After a long stretch of doing one, it's nice to do the other.

Q. Do you have any authority in helping produce a book?

A. If a situation arises on a job I will suggest changes or additions to the editor or art director or writer - and it is discussed - in final decisions on anything big the editor or art director must evaluate whether you're nuts or have added a good thought. At Marvel I think they try to use the best of people's talents and encourage team work. In a way, you have as much authority as your talent provides.

Q. Who are your favorite comic artists and who or what influences you the most?

A. Me!

Q. Do you have any interests in the fine arts (art, sculpture, music, etc.) and what are they and how do you think they have influenced you?

A. That depends. Museum stuff old and new, handycrafts, whatever, can be considered fine arts by some - well I'm getting off here - let's say if I had the money and space, my home would look like a Flea Market to some. My interests are varied, which is valuable to a comic book person I think, because you must be aware and visualize all kinds of atmospheres and situations. Imagination is as important as skill. The development of imagination (if you have the gift or a little present to begin with) is dependent on how much you were and are able to cultivate. I was lucky to have an artistic family (understanding), strict schooling (forced to learn things I didn't think valuable then), availability of books (all kinds), movies (as many as allowance allowed), and not too much of anything.

Q. What is your opinion of the undergrounds? Also would you do work for "them" if the chance arose?

A. "If I had a chance" - I haven't the time, and above ground comics censorship doesn't bother me. Some undergrounds are really funny and some I really don't understand.

Q. What is your opinion of comic fandom? Any efforts worth noting?

A. Depends on the fan. I wouldn't be answering this interview if I were against fandom, but please note some fans treat comic people like movie stars, which is dopey. Some come on like thieves, but I like the ones who adore me...at a distance.

Q. If you had your choice of strips, which would you like to work on?

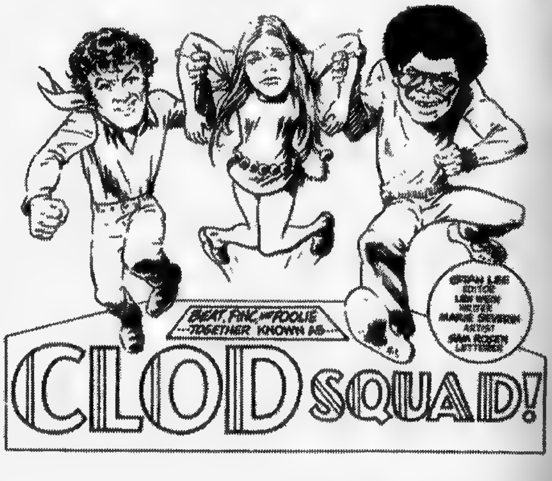
A. Tarzan - Prince Valiant - Donald Duck.

Q. Which job(s) do you enjoy and dislike?

A. The most desirable job should offer a challenge - let you show off a bit and pay well.

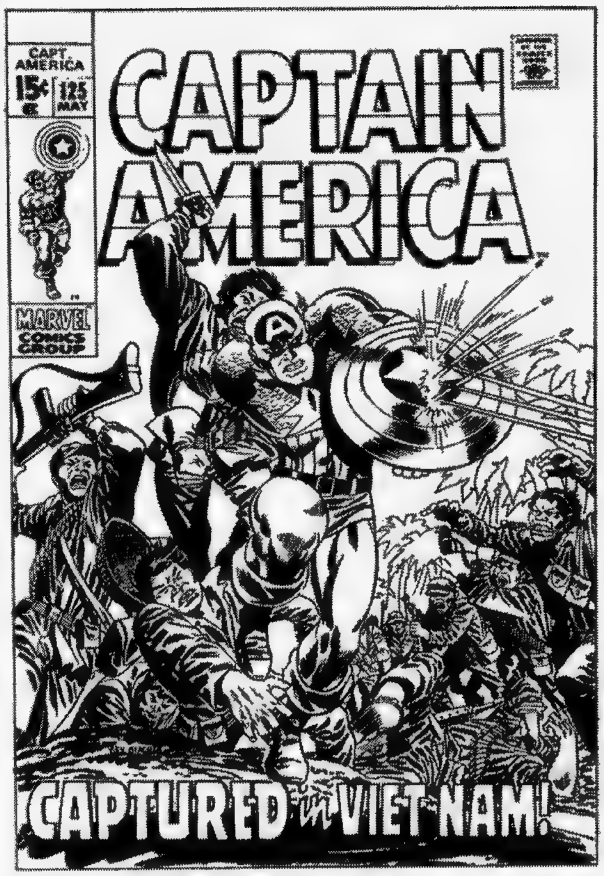
Q. Are there any projects yet undone you'd like to do?

A. Yes!
1. Finish this interview.
2. I would have liked to have brought Kull to its conclusion - and to have given Sub-Mariner more time.
3. Rob a bank and not get caught.
4. Have time to sculpture.



Q. Is there a particular reason why you and your brother (John Severin) are not working on King Kull any longer?

A. John Severin and I were devoting more time than we at Marvel could afford. We quit and Marvel understood.



Unpublished Marie Severin cover, inked by Frank Giacoia.

Q. What is your opinion of the new talent in the comics field? (Guys like Wrightson, Mayerik, Ploog, Weiss, Staton and Starlin, etc.)

A. They are bright, new, good and have faults just like us old pros did and do.

Q. Any comments on the black and white line Marvel is producing?

A. As I said before, artists and writers must approach stories differently. They don't use color and they don't have the Comics Code. In many ways it is adult. Color is attractive to young audiences, but wouldn't it be great to have all illustrated stories printed in full color as many European books do.

Q. I'd like your opinion of The Academy of Comic Book Art.

A. ACBA has brought together at meetings many people who would never have occasion to meet on a socialable basis for discussion of work, problems and mutual awareness. I hope ACBA continues as an Academy to improve the industries image and standards.

Q. Finally, almost, I'd like some background on yourself. Where you grew up, your parents, education, your brother, relationships and anything you're dying to tell someone.

A. I grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y. I was very surprised growing up, that outside of the family:
1. Not everybody draws...what do they do with themselves?
2. That girls do not get dirty.
3. Nor do they get a Lone Ranger doll for Christmas.
4. It was considered cute for a girl to work in comic books.

It is very good to have friends outside of work as well as in. What could be more boring than to discuss in all your free time what you do at work.

I have nothing else to tell anyone. I express enough in the funnies.

Q. How do you want to be remembered (now or later)?

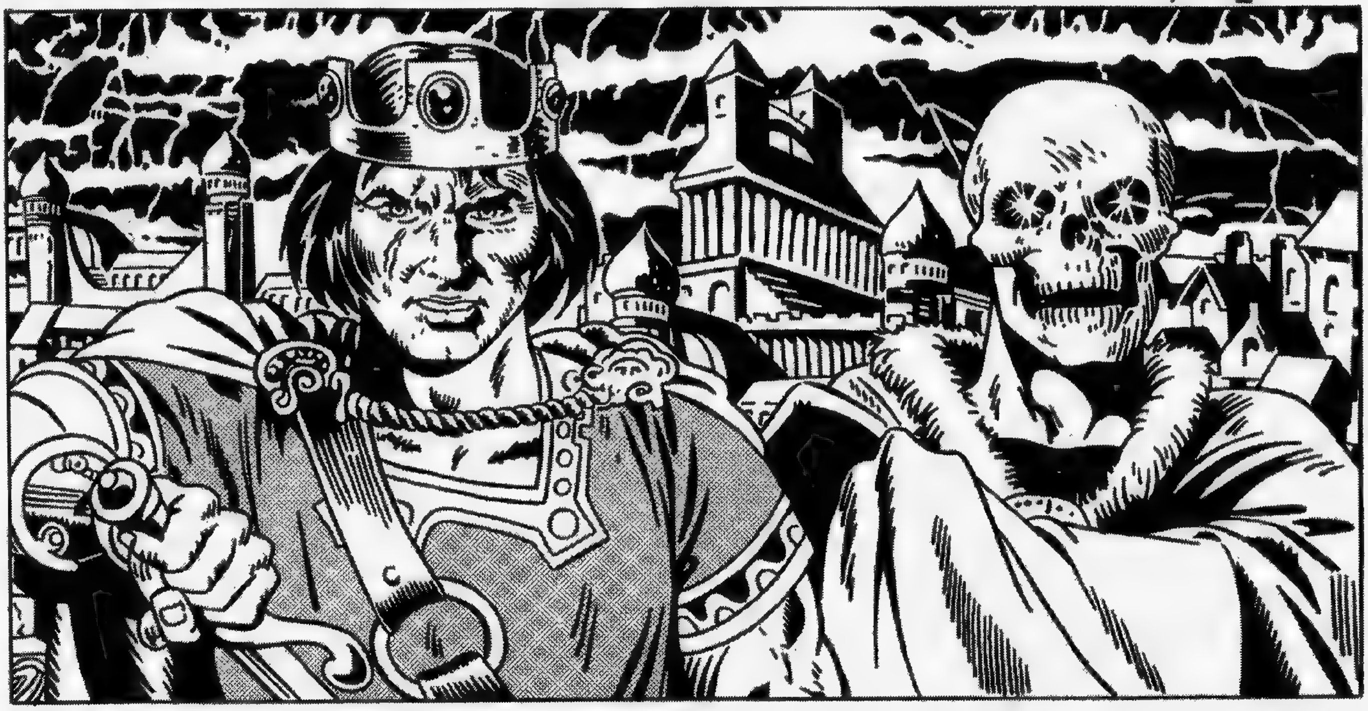
A. Okay - As that talented, stunning lady - who no one wanted to die...because she was so wonderful!

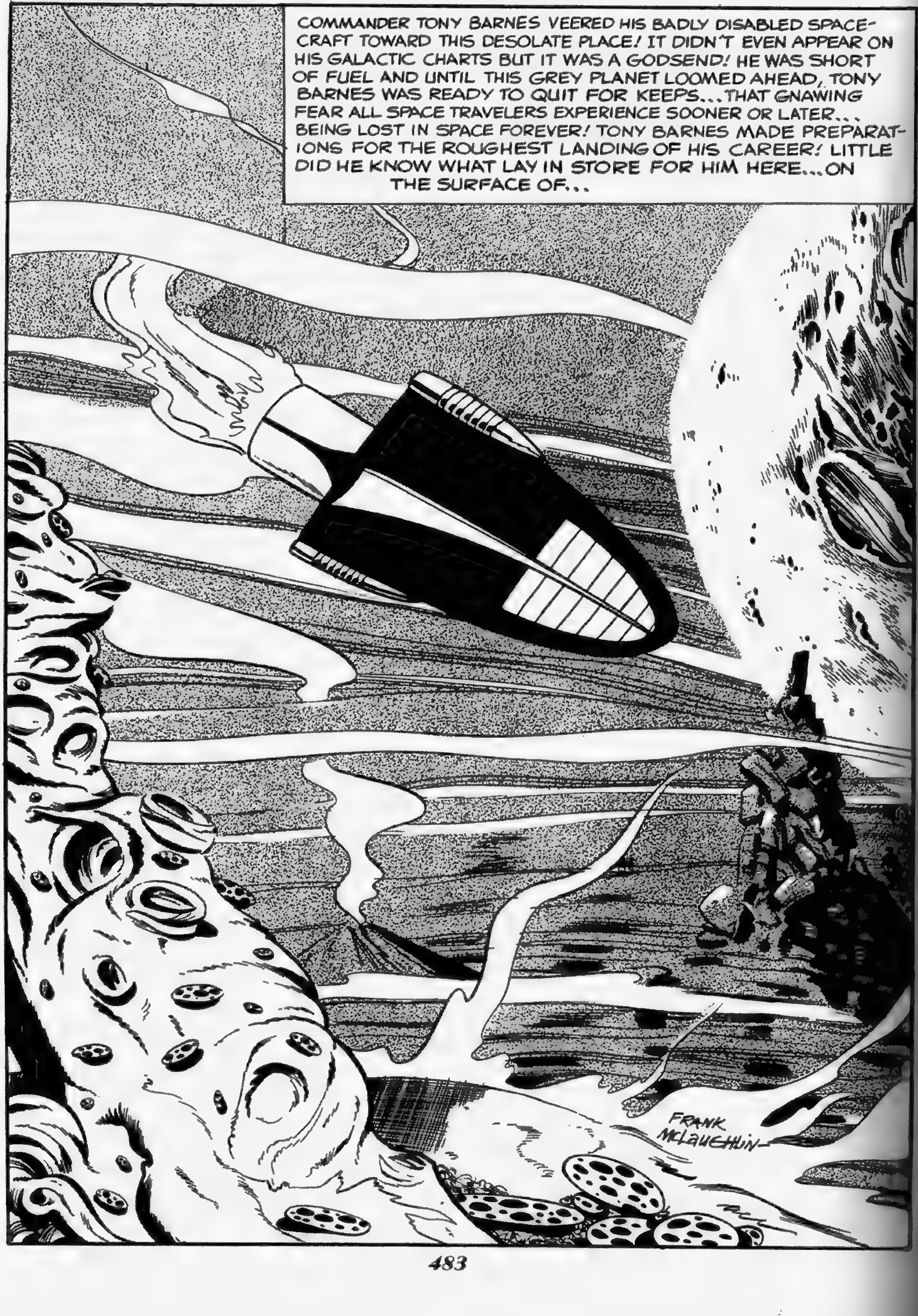
And so, our interview ends. I'd like to thank Bruce Patterson for doing such an outstanding job and I'd also like to thank MARIE SEVERIN for her contributions to the comic book field. Through her skill, comics are just that much more enjoyable.

Art for this article by: Marie Severin, Clyde Caldwell, and Martin L. Greim

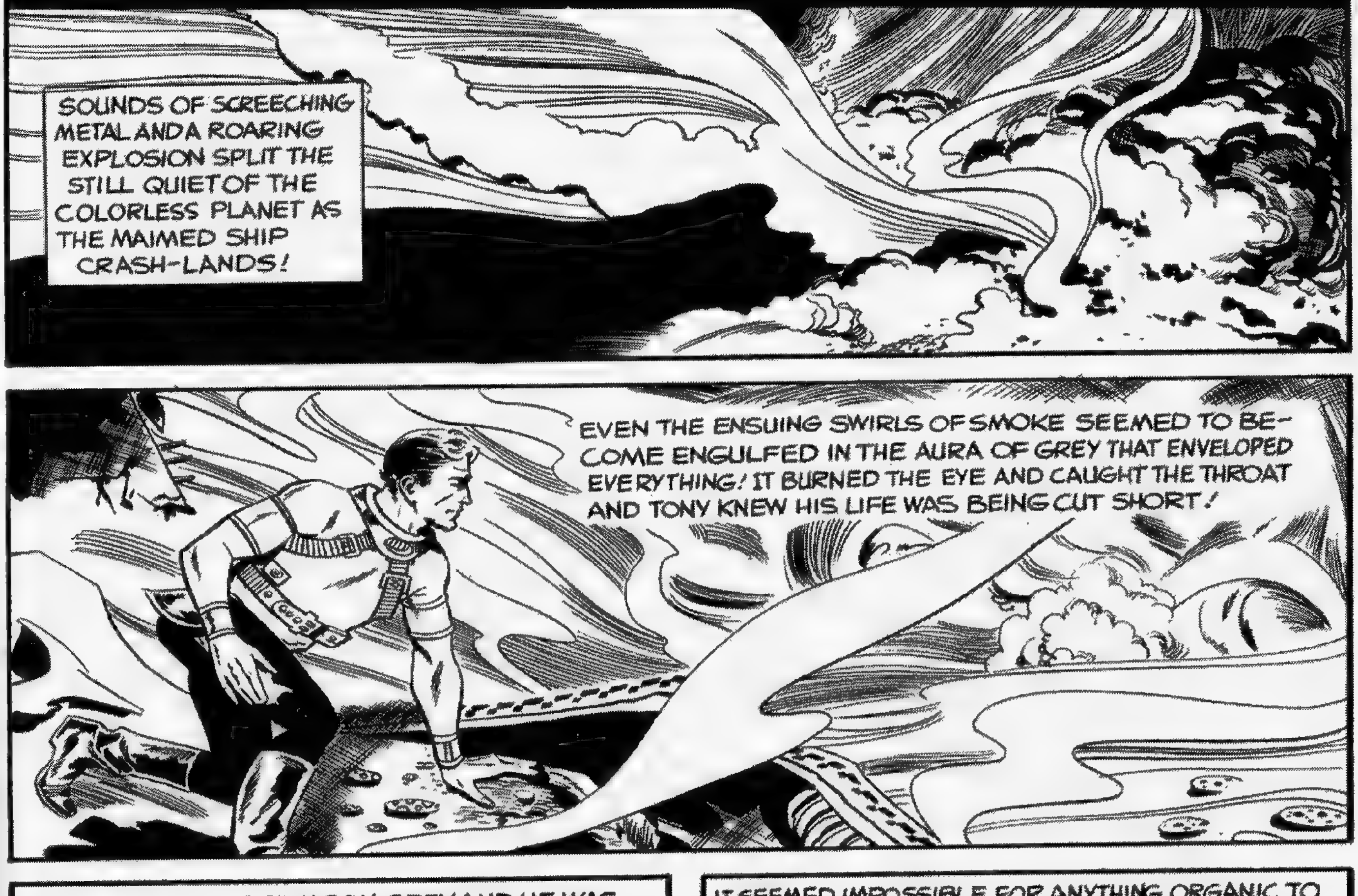
All characters shown in this article are © Marvel Comics Group. 1974

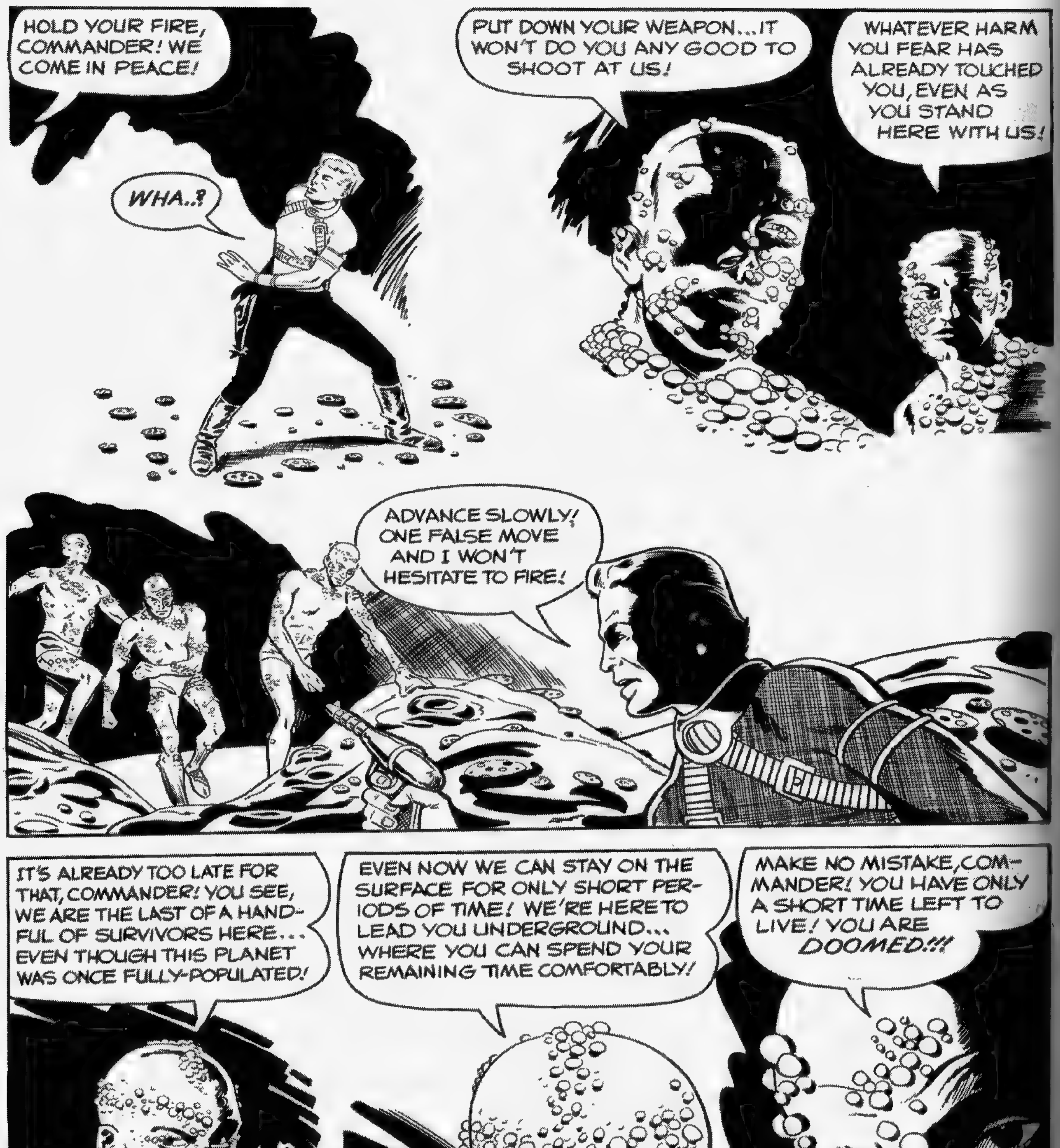
Kull about to face Thulsa Doom by-MLG

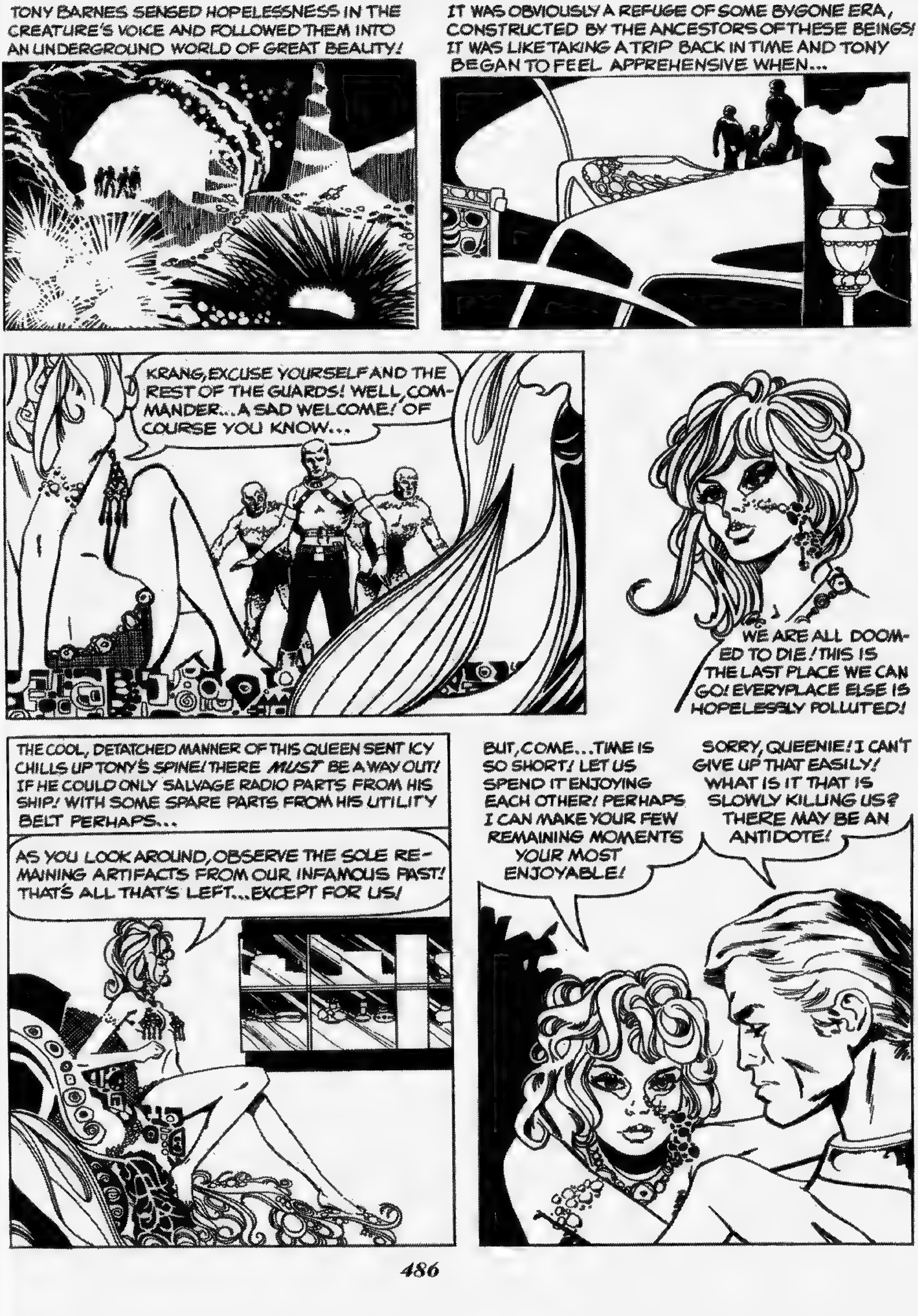


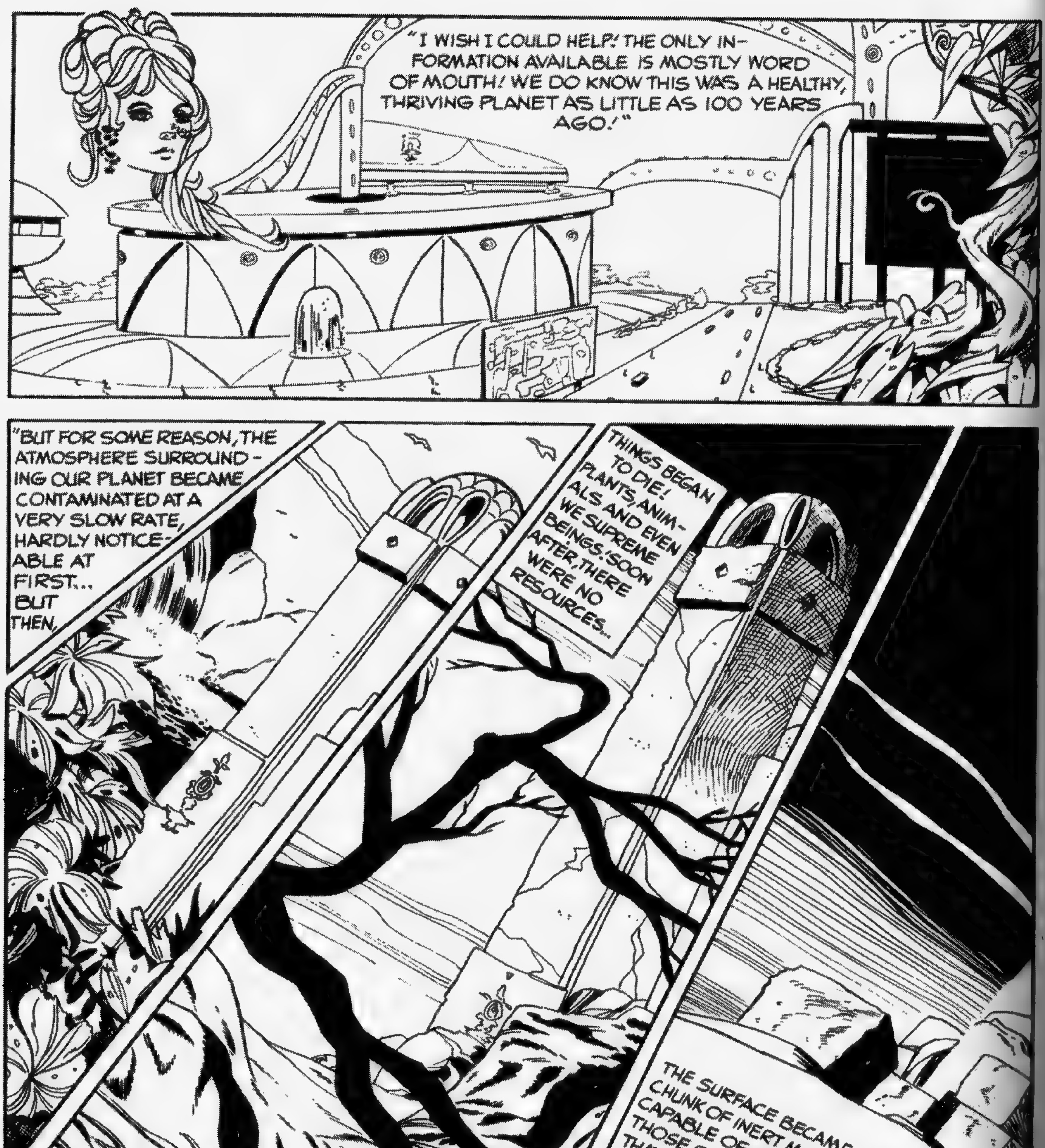

COMMANDER TONY BARNES VEERED HIS BADLY DISABLED SPACECRAFT TOWARD THIS DESOLATE PLACE! IT DIDN'T EVEN APPEAR ON HIS GALACTIC CHARTS BUT IT WAS A GODSEND! HE WAS SHORT OF FUEL AND UNTIL THIS GREY PLANET LOOMED AHEAD, TONY BARNES WAS READY TO QUIT FOR KEEPS... THAT GNAWING FEAR ALL SPACE TRAVELERS EXPERIENCE SOONER OR LATER... BEING LOST IN SPACE FOREVER! TONY BARNES MADE PREPARATIONS FOR THE ROUGHEST LANDING OF HIS CAREER! LITTLE DID HE KNOW WHAT LAY IN STORE FOR HIM HERE...ON THE SURFACE OF...
FRANK McLAUGHLIN

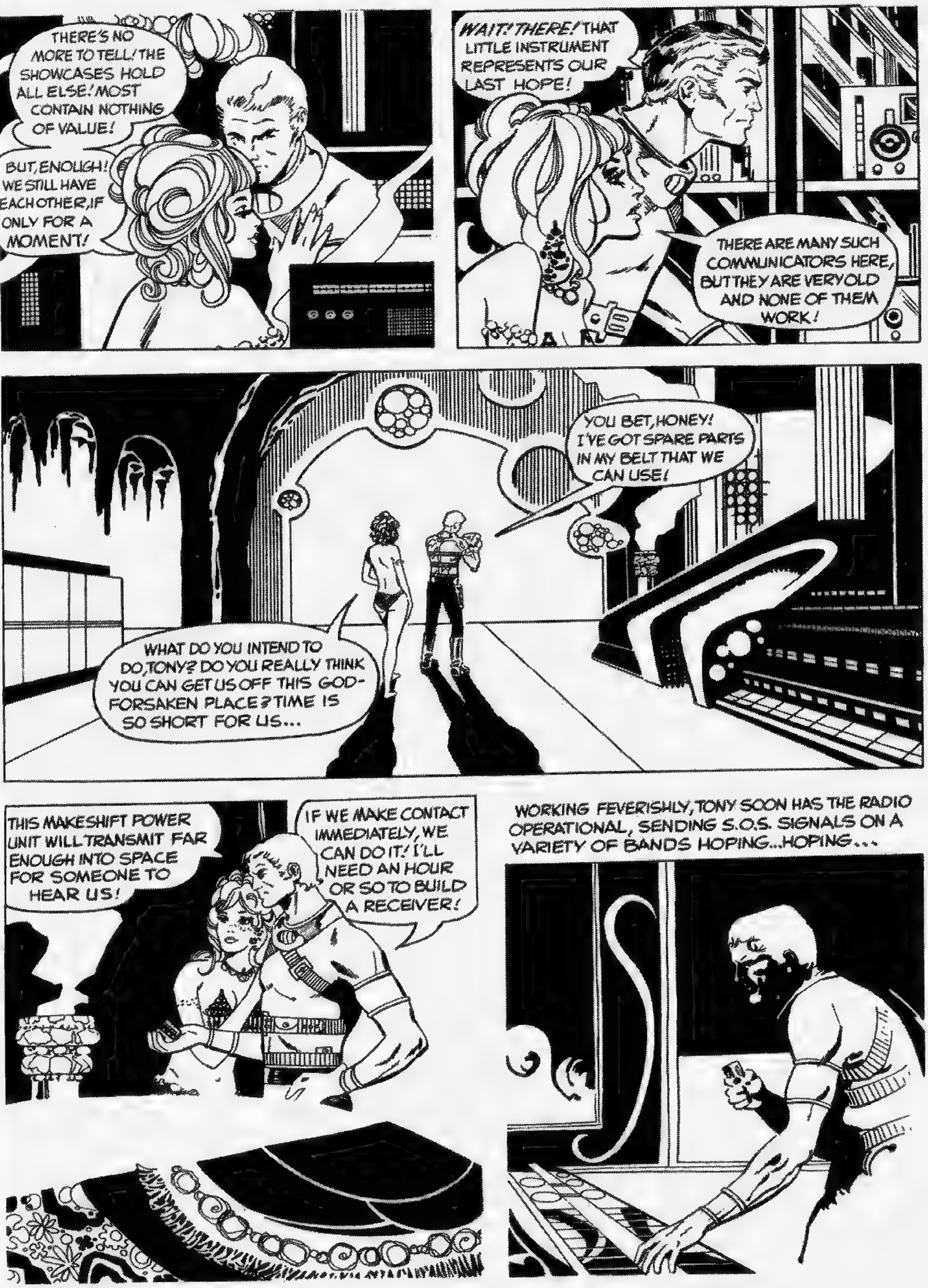
THE DEAD PLANET!

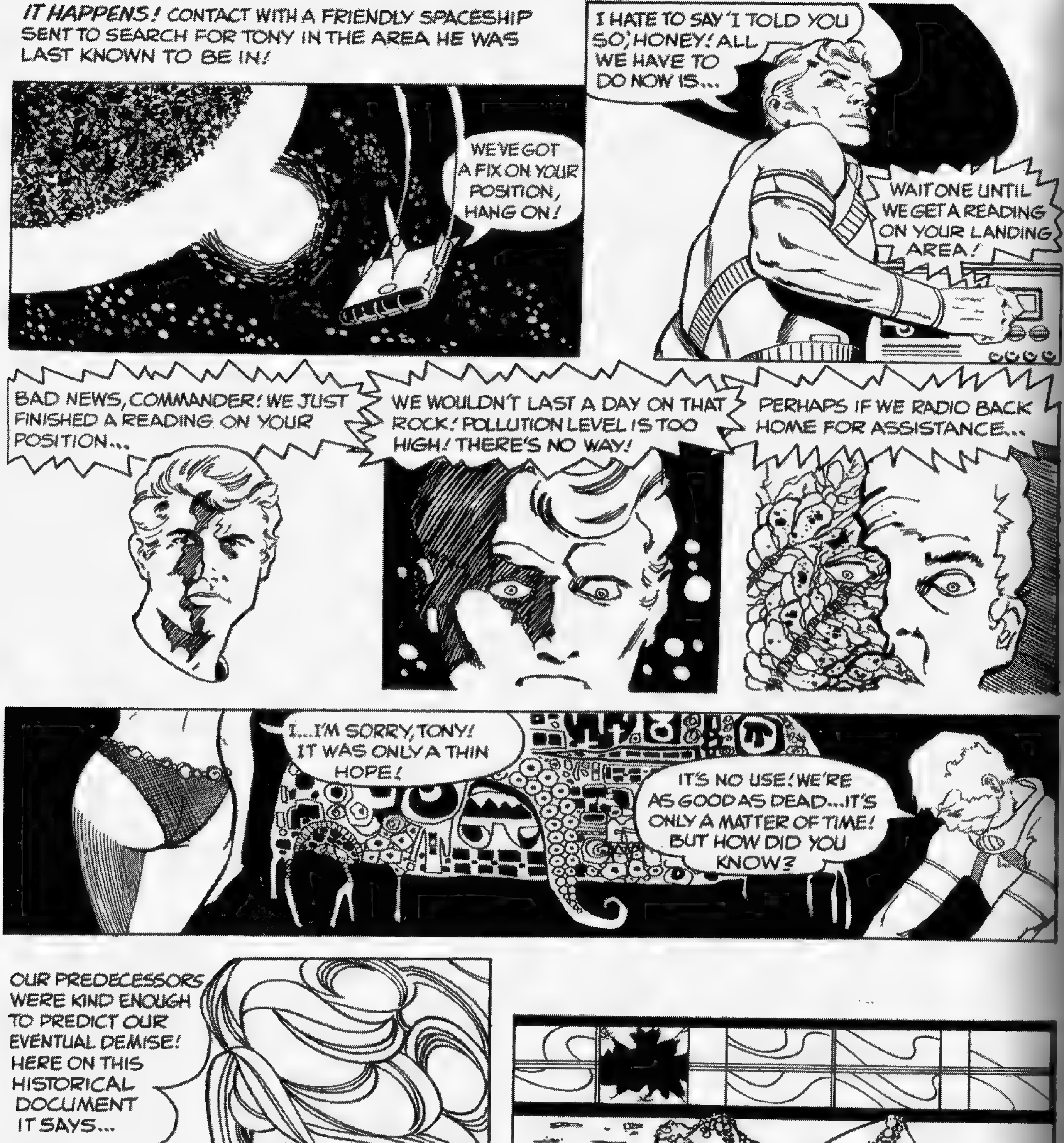

SOUNDS OF SCREECHING METAL AND A ROARING EXPLOSION SPLIT THE STILL QUIET OF THE COLORLESS PLANET AS THE MAIMED SHIP CRASH-LANDS!
EVEN THE ENSUING SWIRLS OF SMOKE SEEMED TO BECOME ENGULFED IN THE AURA OF GREY THAT ENVELOPED EVERYTHING! IT BURNED THE EYE AND CAUGHT THE THROAT AND TONY KNEW HIS LIFE WAS BEING CUT SHORT!
A FINAL BURST OF CRIMSON GREY AND HE WAS ALONE... HIS SHIP COMPLETELY DESTROYED! SHARP PAIN BLURRED HIS VISION AS HE WATCHED HIS LAST HOPE OF SURVIVAL SWIRL AND BILLOW AWAY!
IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYTHING ORGANIC TO SURVIVE HERE, BUT EVEN NOW, TONY WAS BEING OBSERVED BY WATCHFUL EYES!


HOLD YOUR FIRE, COMMANDER! WE COME IN PEACE!
WHA..?
PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPON...IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD TO SHOOT AT US!
WHATEVER HARM YOU FEAR HAS ALREADY TOUCHED YOU, EVEN AS YOU STAND HERE WITH US!
ADVANCE SLOWLY! ONE FALSE MOVE AND I WON'T HESITATE TO FIRE!
IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE FOR THAT, COMMANDER! YOU SEE, WE ARE THE LAST OF A HANDFUL OF SURVIVORS HERE... EVEN THOUGH THIS PLANET WAS ONCE FULLY-POPULATED!
EVEN NOW WE CAN STAY ON THE SURFACE FOR ONLY SHORT PERIODS OF TIME! WE'RE HERE TO LEAD YOU UNDERGROUND... WHERE YOU CAN SPEND YOUR REMAINING TIME COMFORTABLY!
MAKE NO MISTAKE, COMMANDER! YOU HAVE ONLY A SHORT TIME LEFT TO LIVE! YOU ARE DOOMED!!!

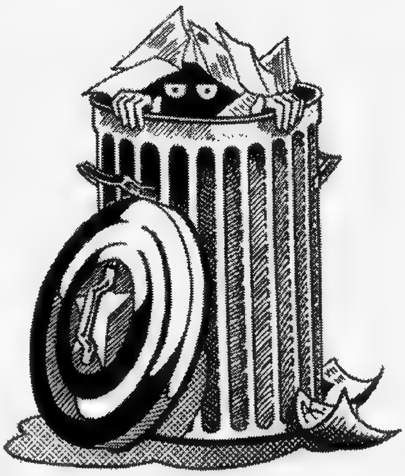

TONY BARNES SENSED HOPELESSNESS IN THE CREATURE'S VOICE AND FOLLOWED THEM INTO AN UNDERGROUND WORLD OF GREAT BEAUTY!
IT WAS OBVIOUSLY A REFUGE OF SOME BYGONE ERA, CONSTRUCTED BY THE ANCESTORS OF THESE BEINGS! IT WAS LIKE TAKING A TRIP BACK IN TIME AND TONY BEGAN TO FEEL APPREHENSIVE WHEN...
KRANG, EXCUSE YOURSELF AND THE REST OF THE GUARDS! WELL, COMMANDER... A SAD WELCOME! OF COURSE YOU KNOW...
WE ARE ALL DOOMED TO DIE! THIS IS THE LAST PLACE WE CAN GO! EVERYPLACE ELSE IS HOPELESSLY POLLUTED!
THE COOL, DETATCHED MANNER OF THIS QUEEN SENT ICY CHILLS UP TONY'S SPINE! THERE *MUST* BE A WAY OUT! IF HE COULD ONLY SALVAGE RADIO PARTS FROM HIS SHIP! WITH SOME SPARE PARTS FROM HIS UTILITY BELT PERHAPS...
AS YOU LOOK AROUND, OBSERVE THE SOLE REMAINING ARTIFACTS FROM OUR INFAMOUS PAST! THAT'S ALL THAT'S LEFT... EXCEPT FOR US!
BUT, COME... TIME IS SO SHORT! LET US SPEND IT ENJOYING EACH OTHER! PERHAPS I CAN MAKE YOUR FEW REMAINING MOMENTS YOUR MOST ENJOYABLE!
SORRY, QUEENIE! I CAN'T GIVE UP THAT EASILY! WHAT IS IT THAT IS SLOWLY KILLING US? THERE MAY BE AN ANTIDOTE!


"I WISH I COULD HELP! THE ONLY INFORMATION AVAILABLE IS MOSTLY WORD OF MOUTH! WE DO KNOW THIS WAS A HEALTHY, THRIVING PLANET AS LITTLE AS 100 YEARS AGO!"
"BUT FOR SOME REASON, THE ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING OUR PLANET BECAME CONTAMINATED AT A VERY SLOW RATE, HARDLY NOTICEABLE AT FIRST... BUT THEN,
THINGS BEGAN TO DIE! PLANTS, ANIMALS AND EVEN WE SUPREME BEINGS! SOON AFTER, THERE WERE NO RESOURCES...
THE SURFACE BECAME A GREAT CHUNK OF INERT MATERIAL... CAPABLE OF GROWING ONLY THOSE SPOTTED MUSHROOMS THAT REPRESENT OUR ONLY SUPPLY OF NOURISHMENT!"


THERE'S NO MORE TO TELL! THE SHOWCASES HOLD ALL ELSE! MOST CONTAIN NOTHING OF VALUE!
BUT, ENOUGH! WE STILL HAVE EACH OTHER, IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT!
WAIT! THERE! THAT LITTLE INSTRUMENT REPRESENTS OUR LAST HOPE!
THERE ARE MANY SUCH COMMUNICATORS HERE, BUT THEY ARE VERY OLD AND NONE OF THEM WORK!
YOU BET, HONEY! I'VE GOT SPARE PARTS IN MY BELT THAT WE CAN USE!
WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO, TONY? DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN GET US OFF THIS GOD-FORSAKEN PLACE? TIME IS SO SHORT FOR US...
THIS MAKESHIFT POWER UNIT WILL TRANSMIT FAR ENOUGH INTO SPACE FOR SOMEONE TO HEAR US!
IF WE MAKE CONTACT IMMEDIATELY, WE CAN DO IT! I'LL NEED AN HOUR OR SO TO BUILD A RECEIVER!
WORKING FEVERISHLY, TONY SOON HAS THE RADIO OPERATIONAL, SENDING S.O.S. SIGNALS ON A VARIETY OF BANDS HOPING...HOPING...


IT HAPPENS! CONTACT WITH A FRIENDLY SPACESHIP SENT TO SEARCH FOR TONY IN THE AREA HE WAS LAST KNOWN TO BE IN!
WE'VE GOT A FIX ON YOUR POSITION, HANG ON!
I HATE TO SAY 'I TOLD YOU SO,' HONEY! ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW IS...
WAIT ONE UNTIL WE GET A READING ON YOUR LANDING AREA!
BAD NEWS, COMMANDER! WE JUST FINISHED A READING ON YOUR POSITION...
WE WOULDN'T LAST A DAY ON THAT ROCK! POLLUTION LEVEL IS TOO HIGH! THERE'S NO WAY!
PERHAPS IF WE RADIO BACK HOME FOR ASSISTANCE...
I...I'M SORRY, TONY! IT WAS ONLY A THIN HOPE!
IT'S NO USE! WE'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD...IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME! BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW?
OUR PREDECESSORS WERE KIND ENOUGH TO PREDICT OUR EVENTUAL DEMISE! HERE ON THIS HISTORICAL DOCUMENT IT SAYS...
GOOD LORD! MY REFLECTION! I...I'VE GOT T...THEM!!!
DAILY NEWS
POLLUTION HIGH
AIR-WATER CONTAMINATED
"A NEAT PIECE OF FICTION YOU SAY? HARDLY! LOOK AROUND YOU AND JUST THINK...THAT NEWSPAPER IS DATED TODAY!"

From the Circular File



DAVID WELBOURNE
5622 Calhoun Ave.
Van Nuys, Calif. 91401

I've read your column in The Buyer's Guide for some time now, and have really enjoyed it. I've learned many new things about comics and fandom from it. At a recent convention I bought a copy of Comic Crusader #15. Fantastic! I spent many enjoyable hours pouring through it and learning about Capt. Marvel and his world. Also I gained new respect for Bill Everett and his art work. In the past I found it a bit hard to take, but at the end I firmly believe it was his craftmanship that made Namor the great he is.

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, THEN THE ISSUE SERVED ITS PURPOSE!

BOB WEISS
1506 Kaye La. NE.
Atlanta, Ga. 30306

Issue #15 was the usual high quality, however there has been such a flood of Capt. Marvel this and that, that I appreciate things like the magic special in C.C. #14 even more because of its scarcity. Ditko is a natural, and I appreciate artistically everything he puts his time into. (As he obviously did with parts 1&2 of his "H" series). The reason I wrote though, was to tell you how touched I was upon reading your efforts on the tribute to the great Bill Everett. It showed much respect and admiration for the man as well as the talent. You are a pro, you do things with respect and tradition. Let me expand on this if I may. I'm a tennis pro here in Atlanta, and I'd say the comic book media and the tennis business are two fields undergoing enormous expansion. I've found that tennis is being prostituted to the utmost. There are some pro's who put as many as a dozen students on one court for group lessons. Any pro knows four is the most that can learn from each other and the instructor at the same time. The King - Riggs grossness belongs in a Fellinni film. Every bit of tennis equipment is now a victim of mass production at large costs and a very low quality. I've been playing tennis since I was four and watching at Forest Hills since I was six years old. I feel very knowledgeable in my field, and I can tell when someone like yourself knows what the hell he's doing as well. You are putting your finest effort and sense of value in the Comic Crusader, obviously not cashing in on the public. People like yourself and Bill Wilson keep the respect I have for the comic media that is quickly dying these days.

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT ME NOT CASHING IN ON THE PUBLIC. I'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO GIVE MY READERS THE MOST FOR THEIR MONEY, WITHOUT TAKING A LOSS MYSELF. IF ONLY THE POST OFFICE AND THE PAPER PRODUCERS WOULD STOP GOING UP ON THEIR PRICES, SO I WOULDN'T HAVE TO GO UP ON MINE.

THOMAS HEGEMAN
R.D. Chatham, N.Y. 12037

I haven't written you a LOC in a long time. I felt I owed you one on C.C. #15 if only to compliment you on the color cover. Actually I believe in writing LOC's to all editors since I believe they deserve some kind of feedback. My only trouble writing to you about Comic Crusader is trying not to have a "Wow, Gee Whiz" type letter. You, however, insist on making this difficult.

Now about the color cover. Since I know you don't believe in taking business losses for income tax purposes I must assume sales are up to allow you to have such a nice cover. I hope to see more of them. I'm also getting my hopes up for some big improvement I can't even imagine. The last time you had a color cover your next issue started the wrap-around cover era of your zine. God only knows what's waiting in the wings for #16.

All your articles were excellent but for me the high points were the talk with the brothers Binder and Kurt Schaffenberger. Recently there has been a lot of attention paid C.C. Beck. It's nice to get a look at some others responsible for Captain Marvel. The unpublished Binder and Raboy model sheets were a welcome addition to a really beautiful article.

I really enjoy the "H" series. Once again I find myself in disagreement with Steve Ditko's philosophy, but the story was very good and unlike the last Mr. A., which appeared in Crusader, the philosophy did not get in the way of telling the story.

Once again, in other words, you have put together a beautifully balanced magazine. Even were you to win an award for Best Fan Artist (regrettably a dim possibility - too many people have other first choices) it would not be the most appropriate award. The most appropriate award for you would be Best Fan Editor, a category which, unfortunately, does not exist. Ah, the petty bothers of being great.

COLOR COVERS ARE BASED ON THE SMALL PROFIT MADE ON EACH ISSUE. WHEN ENOUGH PROFIT IS COLLECTED, I CAN RUN SOMETHING SPECIAL LIKE A COLOR COVER. THERE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL IN THE WORKS. MORE ABOUT THAT NEXT ISSUE! LAST ISSUE GAVE ME A LOT OF PERSONAL SATISFACTION. THE PEOPLE INVOLVED WERE SOME OF THE FINEST I'VE EVER COME IN CONTACT WITH!

NAT PINE
318 Washington Hwy.
Snyder, N.Y. 14226

I enjoyed C.C. #15 a lot. The articles and art were of a very good caliber, seldom enjoyed in other fanzines of the same price. The interviews could have been longer especially the Dave Cockrum one and the Binder interview didn't have enough art by Jack Binder. The Capt. Marvel vs. Sivana was far too long and besides the re-birth of the Capt. Marvel craze has used up its originality. The hero "H" series by Steve Ditko was very good to my amazement and a welcome change from his Mr. A. character. I guess my real complaint is that the zine is too short. I like it so much I don't want it to end.

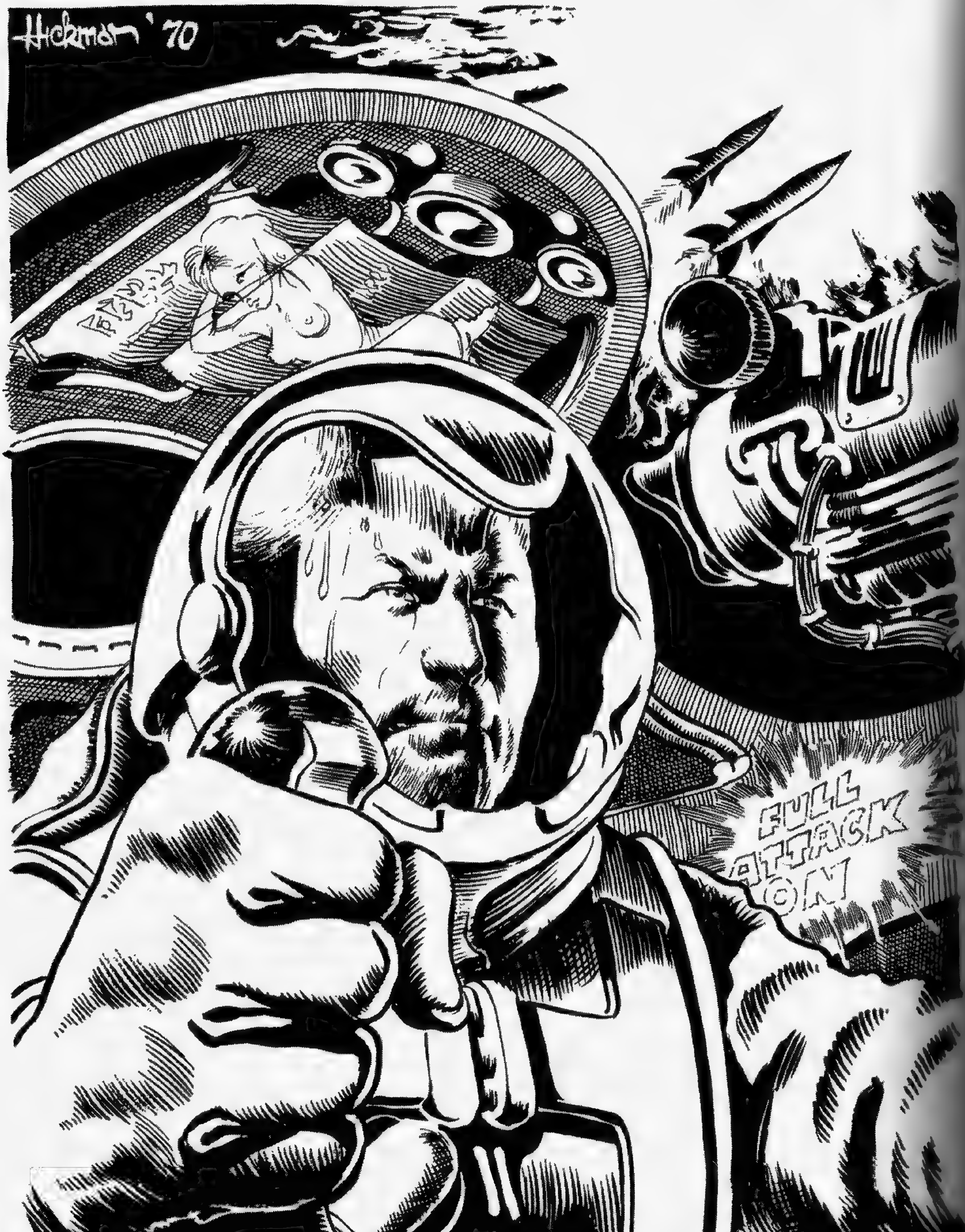
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT, NAT? THERE WERE JUST SO MANY QUESTIONS I COULD ASK DAVE ABOUT CAPT. MARVEL JR. THE INTERVIEW WAS BASICALLY ABOUT HIS WORK ON THE CHARACTER. IT DID, HOWEVER, INCORPORATE A LOT OF INFO ON DAVE IN THE BARGAIN. GLAD YOU ENJOYED THE BINDER ART. C.C. SHORT? IT'S 40 REDUCED PAGES (44 this issue). EACH PAGE OF C.C. IS THE EQUIVALENT OF 3 FULL SIZED TYPED PAGES.

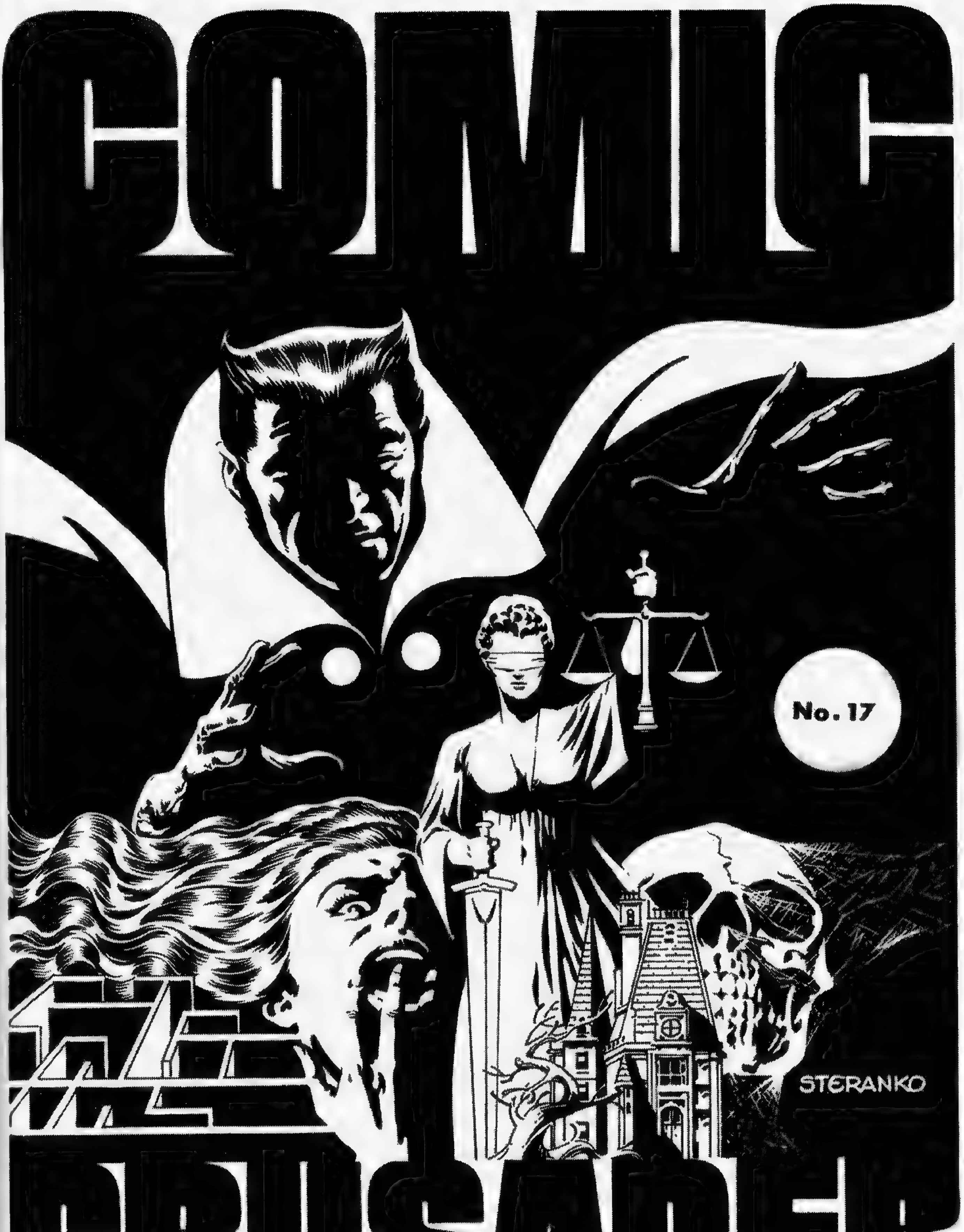
COMIC CRUSADER 17

In this issue we visit DEATH, Stan Pitt, Green Lantern and Green Arrow and a very unusual new Steve Ditko strip. Price: $1.00

Order from: MARTIN L. GREIM
BOX 132
DEDHAM, MASS. 02026

Price... $1.00


Hickman '70
FULL ATTACK ON


COMIC
No. 17
STERANKO
CRUSADER

CRUSADER COMMENTS

The man in black, pictured below, is also known as DEATH! It is most appropriate that he is the lead feature for this issue---because this issue marks the death of COMIC CRUSADER!

Over the years I've presented some of the best researched articles ever presented in fandom, top notch interviews and art by some of the finest amateurs and professionals. In doing this I've always kept C.C. at an affordable level. I'm truly pleased that you readers have enjoyed this publication and made it one of the most read in fandom. I'm also thankful to the many fans and pros who have helped me along the way. I couldn't have done it without them.

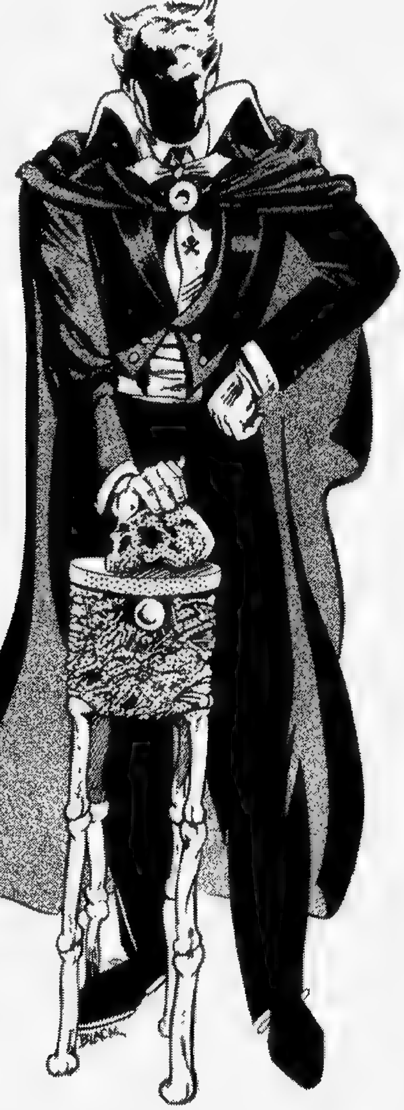
Now it's time for me to move in other directions. C.C. is dead, at least for the time being, but who knows what the future holds. One item in the future is COMIC CRUSADER STORYBOOK. You can read about that on the last page of this issue.

For those of you who have subscribed beyond this issue, you will find a refund with it. I don't wish to apply it to "Storybook" as I have no idea what it will cost at this time.

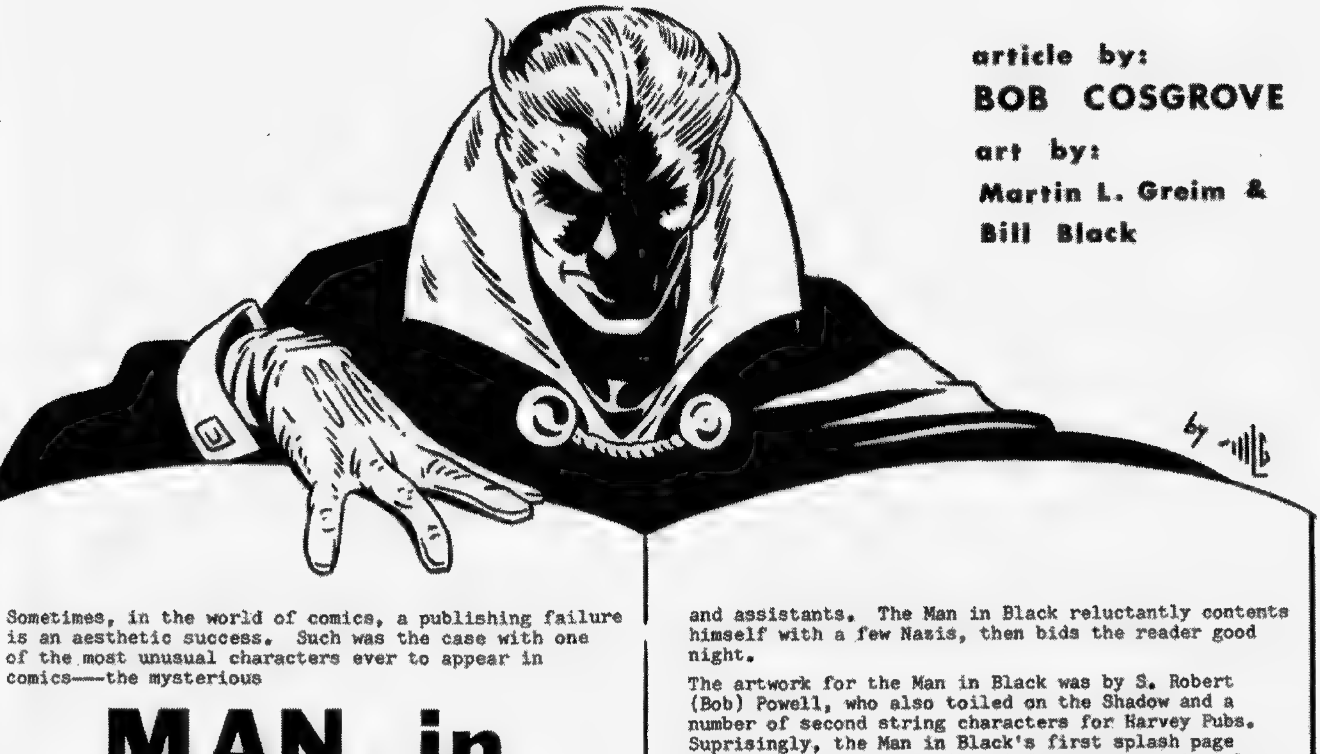
About this issue...I want to thank all concerned! You've helped C.C. go out with a bang! It's especially fitting that a JIM STERANKO cover graces this last issue, since Jim was on hand in the first. He gave me C.C.'s first pro interview and we've been friends ever since. This cover is © Jim Steranko 1976.

BOB COSGROVE is represented in this issue. To my mind he is fandom's BEST WRITER. He's been with me since C.C.'s beginning and we have a friendship that can't be expressed in words. BOB, this issue is dedicated to you!

(continued on inside back cover.)



article by:
BOB COSGROVE
art by:
Martin L. Greim &
Bill Black



Sometimes, in the world of comics, a publishing failure is an aesthetic success. Such was the case with one of the most unusual characters ever to appear in comics——the mysterious

MAN in BLACK

The Man in Black's career spanned twenty-one years——from 1945 to 1966, and in that time he appeared in many titles from Harvey Comics: All New Comics #'s 11 & 14, Front Page Comic Book #1, Green Hornet Comics #'s 31 thru 34, Kerry Drake #10, Thril-O-Rama #'s 1 thru 3, and, for a brief time, in his own magazine Man in Black. It has been said that there were five issues of Man in Black, however attempts to locate the fifth issue - including a notice in the Buyer's Guide and letters to a number of leading collectors and dealers - proved unsuccessful.

The Man in Black made his initial appearance in All New Comics #11, Spring, 1945, a Harvey comics title featuring a line-up of also-ran characters: Boy Heroes, Girl Commandos, and several general short stories. In the middle of the book was the Man in Black, narrating a story entitled "Death picks a Victim!" Except for the imposing figure of the Man in Black, standing to the left of the story, arms folded, the reader might take it for another filler. In fact, the figure identifies himself as "the man in the shadows——or as you may know me——DEATH." He appears in black tuxedo, with cape. Beneath his silver, satanic hair, his face is totally obscured by shadow. After introducing his friend, the helmeted "Destruction," the Man in Black tells a war time tale, of two brothers. When Captain Richard Kipp is listed as missing after a January 26, 1944 bombing raid in Berlin, his younger brother (who apparently has no first name, since even his brother calls him "Kipp") sneaks aboard another flight, determined to find him. Kipp is shot down, and crashes in a small German farmyard. There the underground befriends him, assisting him thru France to Dunkirk, where he finally finds his brother. As the two brothers prepare to depart, they are accosted by a squad of Nazis. As the Man in Black tells it,

> ——suddenly the sky was filled with a roar and the scream of many falling bombs rent the air... and a tremendous blast shook the earth...and out of this tumilt came DESTRUCTION'S horrible laugh——clutching my arm, he held me back as I reached for Dick and Kipp.

Explaining that Death cheated him at Lille, where "there were many dead but no destruction," Destruction adds that as bombers, Kipp and Dick are his friends and assistants. The Man in Black reluctantly contents himself with a few Nazis, then bids the reader good night.

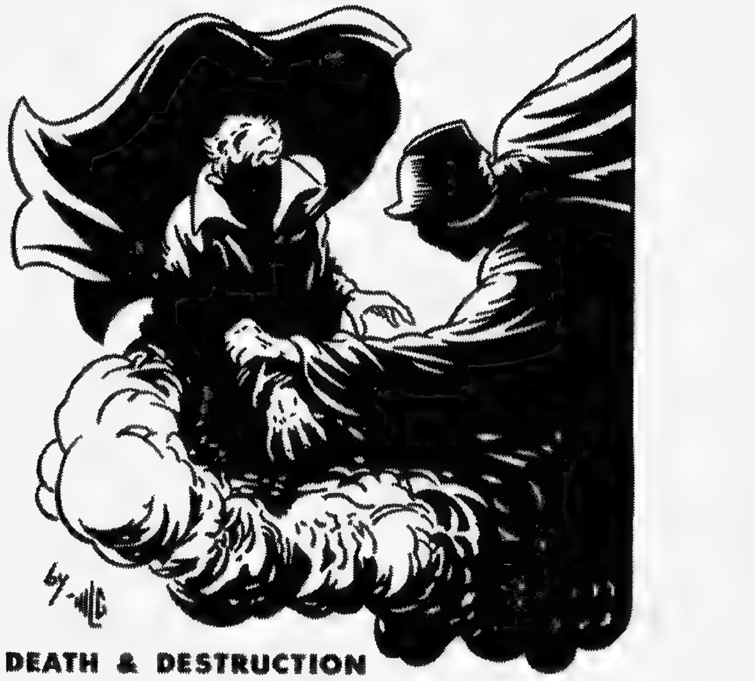
The artwork for the Man in Black was by S. Robert (Bob) Powell, who also toiled on the Shadow and a number of second string characters for Harvey Pubs. Suprisingly, the Man in Black's first splash page bears the words "A Martin Epp Feature," prominently displayed under the title. Epp was an assistant of Powell's who did inking and lettering, and was not yet working for publishers on a direct basis. Howard Nostrand, who also worked with Powell, dismisses the credit line as "a gag. Someone was being funny, or perhaps Bob didn't want to sign the story for some reason and decided, what the hell, put Marty's name in there." Most later stories were signed by Powell, and all the stories appear to be his work.

In addition to his work at Harvey, Powell drew what Jules Fieffer called "the best of the magician strips (not excepting Mandrake)" Mr. Mystic, a back-up feature to Will Eisner's Sunday Spirit sections, and churned out "Sheena, Queen of the Jungle" for Fiction House. Another famous Powell strip was Bobby Benson and his B-Bar-B Riders. For a short time, in the early sixties Powell worked at Marvel, drawing the Torch and Thing strip for Strange Tales, and pencilling a few Daredevil stories which Wally Wood inked.

Powell's early work on Man in Black displays his skill at drawing air craft. As the strip developed, Powell perfected his compositional style, eschewing stock shots, and substituting an array of beautifully individualistic homely facial shots for the standard heroic faces.

The Man in Black's next appearance is in Front Page Comic Book, where he holds the lead spot in a ten page feature entitled "Death is a Co-Pilot." After introducing himself as "your story teller——the Man in Black"——he proceedes with a routine tale about Von Pagel, a conceited German ace, double-crossed by his commanders, who is shot down by American fliers. In this story, the Man in Black enters the action, conversing with Von Pagel, and riding along in the cockpit until the final moment, when the hapless ace suddenly realizes the identity of his guest. This story introduces "Fate," a young brown-haired woman in flowing green robes, who sits "weaving her strands." She appears in but three panels of the story and has no important role.

Not until Green Hornet #31, Nov. - Dec., 1946, does the Man in Black return, in "Tale of Treachery." This story is a good example of war-time excess. Lieutenant J. B. "Biff" Ryan, of the U.S. Army Air Corps says goodbye to a small wedding party. The bride: his sister. The groom: his best friend, "Suboto." The place: Sverabaya, Java. The date: Dec. 8th, 1941. Biff is no sooner airborne when he turns on the radio and learns of the Pearl Harbor



DEATH & DESTRUCTION

bombing. His reaction is intense:

Pearl Harbor! War!! And
My Sister is the Bride of
Suboto Osato—A Jap!...
An Enemy! My Enemy!...
It must be a mistake!
It's got to be!!

Within an instant, Biff's "best friend" is now a "Jap," an "enemy." And no, it isn't a mistake. Suboto throws his own wife in prison, and in the end, she stabs him to death. The story is also regressive in that the Man in Black has become a mere narrator, of the EC-Dr. Graves-Mysterious Traveller sort. For the first time, however, the splash panel is signed "Powell."

The Man in Black's non-involvement continues in his next story, also signed by Powell, which appears in the following issue of Green Hornet Comics, #32. With the war over, the Man in Black narrates a semi-comic sunken treasure story.

With Green Hornet #33, however, the series shows more promise, beginning with the impressive splash, an all black page, save for a spotlight, illuminating a downshot of the Man in Black, who again variously identifies himself as "Mr. Twilight" and "Death." The plot of this story is simple; daredevil Ken Parks is attempting to set a new record in an experimental jet plane. As he is about to depart, a man races up and asks him to deliver a special serum, "the only thing" that can save a dying little girl in New York. Within this framework, various figures from a pop-mythology fight to influence Ken's flight. "Father Time," hoping to end the little girl's life, irritates Mr. Twilight, who seems unaccountably reluctant to perform his duties. On the plane, "Googy the Gremlin," complete with saw and drill fingers, pries away at the wing. The plane crashes, but Ken escapes with the serum, cheating Father Time. Most elements of subsequent Man in Black tales are there - a seemingly simple story complicated by supernatural beings who, unbeknownst to mankind, interfere in the affairs of men; the light, comic tone, playing against the serious storyline; even an imp, Googy, who annoys the Man in Black.

The same elements, handled with increasing confidence and ease, make the Man in Black's next outing, a ten-pager in Green Hornet #34, his finest appearance to date. Mr. Twilight has just claimed Martha Gilmore, a "famous girl doctor" whose plane has crashed in remote Tibet. To his consternation, however, the Oriental Doctor Hideki uses a strange machine to return Martha to life. Frustrated, the Man in Black returns to heaven and tells his story to "The Three Blind Fates" and the green, cloven-hoofed "Imp of Mischief." An angel appears, with a scroll, presumably inscribed by God, who wants no part of Death's problems, and tells Mr. Twilight to figure it out for himself.

Back on earth, Dr. Hideki creates another opportunity for the Man in Black. Wishing to learn if there's an afterlife, he injects Martha with poison, which he explains as "a drug to induce sleep." As Mr. Twilight watches, he makes a curious comment, inconsistent with past adventures and subsequent events in this story. "Tho' I'm Death," he muses, "I can't kill—I'm what happens after they're killed!" Again Martha dies; again Mr. Twilight claims her, telling her spirit, "Don't be afraid—our kingdom is very beautiful and only the joys of earth are increased a hundred fold!"

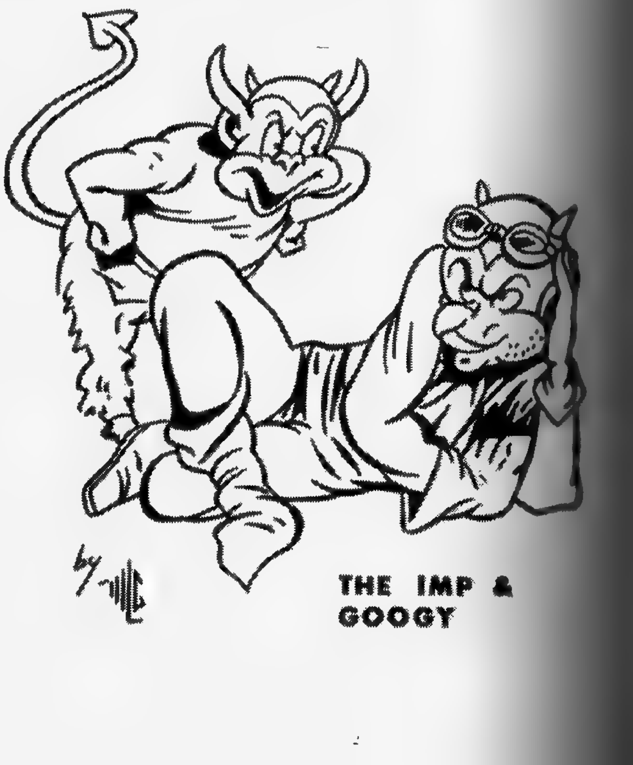
Hideki's machine tears Martha from Death's grasp, and when she recovers consciousness the doctor eagerly questions her. At that moment, "Lt. Len Martin, U.S. Army Air Force" bursts in to collect his fiancee Martha. A struggle ensues, and Hideki shoots Martin. The Man in Black collects Martin's spirit, but as he turns to leave, notes that Hideki is "at it again." Totally exasperated, he appears before Hideki and grapples with him. Len, brought back by Hideki's machine, promptly shoots the doctor, killing him instantly.

Grabbing the Imp, the Man in Black insists he tamper with Martin's plane so Len and Martha will both die. The Imp has other plans, and outwits Mr. Twilight, who chains the Imp in revenge. With this story, a tight plot, Powell's art, the comic interplay between Mr. Twilight and the Imp, all combined into a single effect. The reader could look forward to some exciting future adventures. IN VAIN! The Man in Black disappeared. Whether it was economics, boredom on Powell's part, or the whim of the publisher, John Donne's famous prediction, "Death, Thou Shalt Die!" finally came true.

Ten years later, the Man in Black made a comeback, this time in his own magazine, dated September, 1957. He looked just about the same as he had in June of 1947, still in tux, cloak, and white gloves. However, the shadows which had always obscured his face now receded somewhat. The reader still couldn't see him clearly, but now there was the suggestion of eyes and eyebrows, a smiling mouth, and the rounded tip of a nose protruding from the shadows.

With him, the Man in Black had a new supporting cast; the blonde and lovely Venus, goddess of Love, and the raven-haired, no-nonsense Weaver, "she who weaves the patterns of life."

The cover hinted at the big change, however, in asking, "Who is the Man in Black?" anyone who had followed him in the forties had a ready answer: "Mr. Twilight. Death." WRONG! Perhaps "M.B.," as the Weaver called him, had spent those ten years thumbing through celestial help-wanted adds. In any case, he had a new job. As he explained it, "Some call me Fate——some Kismet——and others Luck!" In his new role, the Man



THE IMP & GOOGY

in Black disliked his old chores. When the Weaver, who seems to be the Man in Black's superior, orders him to collect "those destined for the after-world," he balks. "What did you say?!" he asks incredulously. "Me?!! Why, me!? That's not my job!"

In addition to a special introductory panel, the first issue contains three major Man in Black stories: "Brush Strokes," about an artist who wants to create the world's greatest painting; "The Hanging Thread;" and "The Fly In The Ointment," a lady-or-the-tiger variation set in the mythical past. In addition, the book contains a two-pager, "Second Chance," a science fiction story depicting the way earth was destroyed, then retold to show how it might have been saved; two text tales, and a five-page tale of an ancient gladiator and doomed Pompei, as narrated by the Weaver.

"The Hanging Thread" deserves special mention, both because of its artistic excellence, and its resemblence to a 1941 tale featuring another famous Bob Powell character, Mr. Mystic. (Recounted in "Save Us Magician, Cried We And Came The Answer---'I Failed To Save The One Thing I Loved Most!'" by Tom Fagan, in Comic Crusader #14 - R.C.) The theme of the story is an old one--- "Amor vincit omnia." A group of people aboard a doomed ship engages in an argument--which is stronger, love or Fate? The Weaver and the Man in Black carry on the argument, taking sides against Venus. The discussion ends when Weaver sends Fate to destroy the ship and collect the passengers fated to die. As the ship goes down, Fate appears to the doomed and urges them to go willingly. One woman, however, refuses to allow her husband to go down with the ship, and insists he join her in the life boat. Angered, Fate chastizes the woman, then destroys the life boat. Undaunted, the woman pulls her unconcious husband aboard a raft. Weaver, annoyed, sends Fate back to finish the job. In an instant, Fate's shadowy form materializes, hovering above the life raft. "Your husband is a little late for his appointment!", he reminds her.

> "I---I've been expecting you---" she replies.
> "Then you know he must go!"
> "Must he?! Can't you see how much I love him?"
> "I'm sorry but love is meaningless!---When it comes to Fate!"
> And then---"As I reached for the man a tear dropped on my glove! I drew back my hand as if it were burned and stared at it---a single glistening tear---the epitome of human sorrow 'the symbol of anguish---and of everlasting love!' I felt like a heel! I couldn't do it! I'd face the music with the Weaver but I had to let him go!"

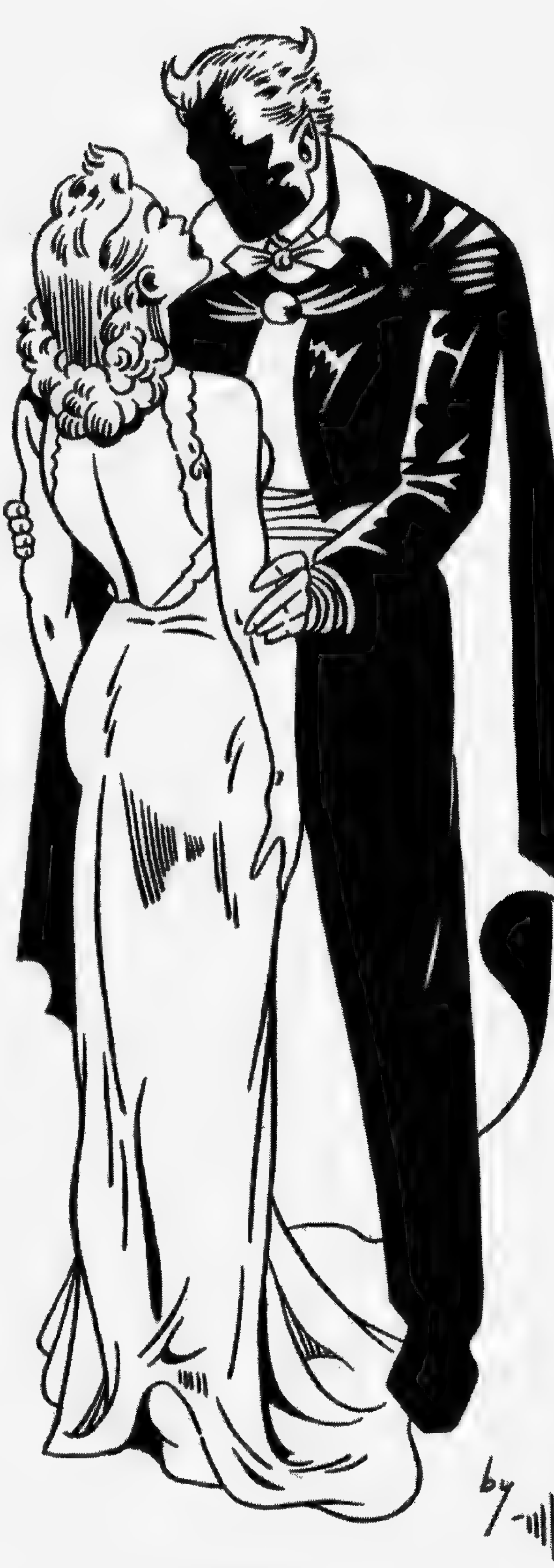
The Man in Black turns and vanishes. The woman, arms cradled about her husband, murmurs two words, "T-Thank you."

But the story is not over. The final page features a comic conclusion--the Weaver chewing out Fate, and Venus flinging a cloud of tears and kidding Fate about his alleged omnipotence. Like all the stories in this issue, the art is outstanding. Powell abandons the pen in favor of stylish brush work. He has clearly learned much about composition and perspective, and peoples his stories with a variety of facial types instead of standard heroic faces. The immortals--- Venus, Weaver, and the Man in Black himself---are skillfully rendered with zip-a-tone and double tone.

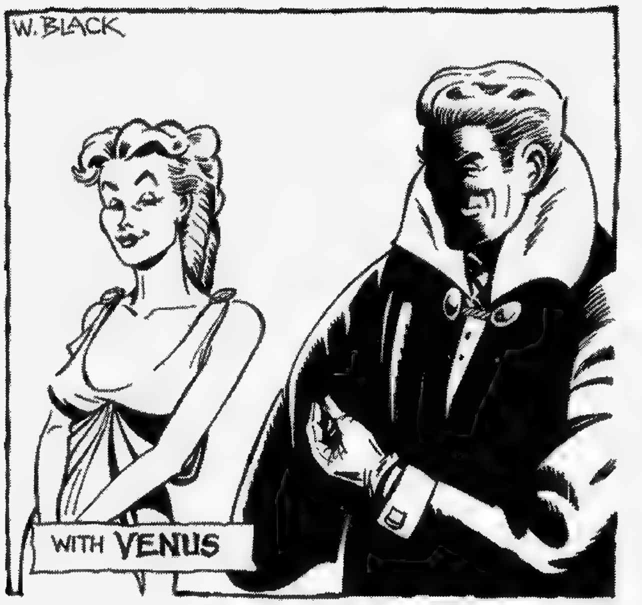
It was in the second issue that Man in Black underwent his final refinements. In "Betrayed," another character, Cupid, makes his debut; teaming up with mother Venus to create problems for Fate. Weaver has ordered Fate to see to it that a beautiful girl spy betrays her country, but Cupid makes her fall in love with a patriot, so that at the last moment, she instead doublecrosses her cohorts. Man in Black is furious, but Weaver is philosophical. "I like this ending better than mine! And might I add, that it's a good thing I do or you, Venus, and you, Cupid, would be finished! Done! Kaput! For messin' around." Powell's cupid is a homely, exasperating little cherub, the direct descendent of Googy and the Imp.

The two page feature also undergoes a change. Abandoning the Future, the Man in Black in "This is How It Might Have Happened," shows Caesar's armies wiped out at the Rubicon, then on the following page, demonstrates how his timely interference enabled Caesar to cross the Rubicon and become emperor of Rome.

Obviously, Powell and company had hit on an entertaining formula. First, select an event in History. Second, think of events that would prevent History from



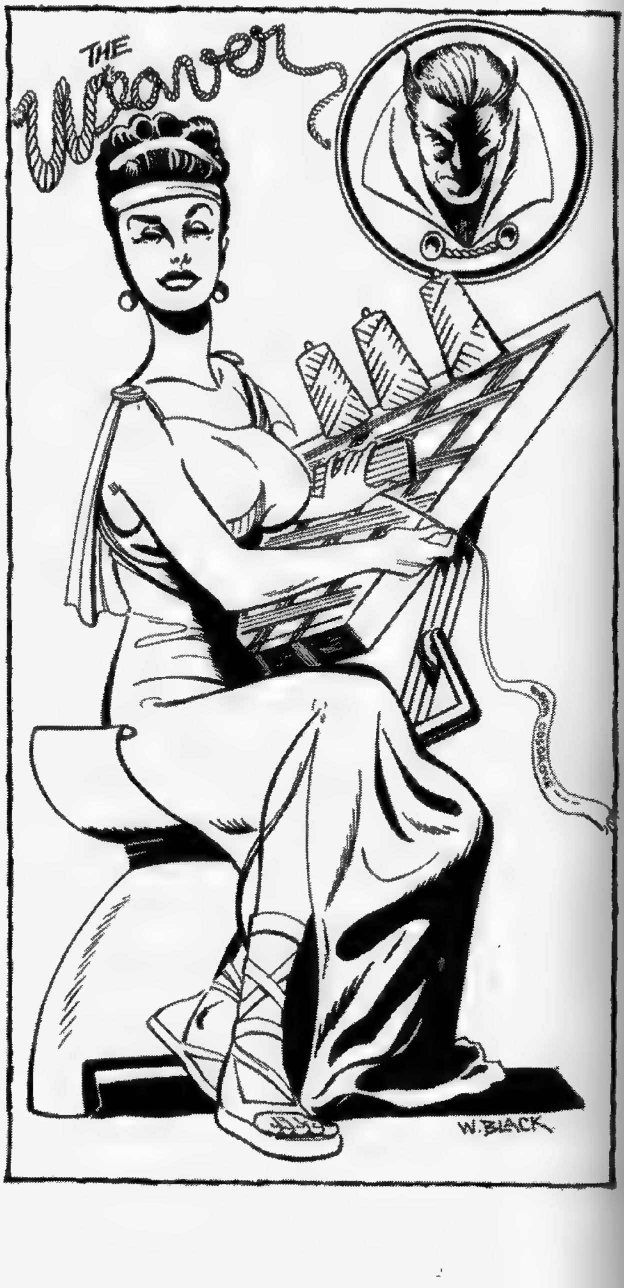
DEATH'S EMBRACE



happening as it did. Finally, create entertaining ways for Fate to thwart those events. In "Menace on the Iron Horse," Powell follows this formula to the letter. He invents a man to assassinate Lincoln on a train, then has Fate kill him, allowing Lincoln to continue guiding his country until he finally keeps a postponed engagement with an assassain's bullet. Fate's methods are simple--He'll stick a train seat so it can't be moved, trip a man, lead a curious bear to an emergency flare. Powell dramatizes these ordinary events effectively, shrinking Fate to tiny size, or depicting him as a towering giant holding up a bridge. Other stories in issue two are "Crack-Up," with Fate saving the life of a race-car driver, and the inevitable Powell airplane tale, a World War I adventure entitled, "The Indestructable One." The splash reads, "Staring The Weaver," but she appears only in the first and last panels.

Issue #3 of the Man in Black bears the only striking cover of the series, and depicts Fate swinging from a falling W.W.I aircraft. (Issue one had Fate watching a girl jump from a painting; #2, Fate saving Lincoln; and #4 Fate playing chess with various people and objects.) Stories for this issue fit the now-familiar mode: in "The Plotter," Fate saves the life of Pharaoh Ikhnaton, even as he saved Lincoln in issue #2; "The Invention," shows how a World War I fighter pilot inadvertently kills an enemy airman who, years ago, had saved his life; Weaver presents a pre-W.W.II Dirigible story, about a love-smitten young man who is saved from flying on the doomed Hindenburg; and "This is How It Might Have Happened" has the Man in Black saving a non-entity named Ralph Coe from a train crash. Particularly interesting is the lead story in this issue, "The Genius," which features a young sculptor who wins the gratitude of Alexander the Great and goes on to sculpt the famed Nike of Samothrace. To introduce the sculptor to Alexander, Fate employs the aid of Thor and Vulcan, whom Powell depicts in semi-comic fashion. "The Genius" embodies many of the strengths and weaknessess of the Man in Black magazine. On the one hand, the story is well-drawn, set in an exotic locale, and obviously well-researched. On the other---how many youngsters will understand the punchline when they learn that the sculptor is the creator of Nike of Samothrace? Or, in the unlikely event that the stories are aimed at older readers, is the originality of concept, and Powell's marvelous style, enough to compensate for the shortness of the stories (typically five pages) and their frankly formulaic nature? No one can say for certain. What is certain is that the Man in Black appeared for the fourth and final time (as far as we are able to ascertain) in his own magazine with the March, 1958 issue. The stories generally followed the previous format. In "Ambush," Fate shows how he assured the massacre at Little Big Horn, "Jim's Eagle" has the Man in Black protecting "Old Sam," the living personification of our coins and emblems. The Weaver's contribution is an ironic tale about a janitor who steals a worthless "treasure," and "This Is How It Might Have Happened" shows Fate saving the life of History's most famous hunchback, AESOP. "The Thief," featuring Fate's friendly antagonists Cupid and Venus, introduces another celestial character, "Duty," a short, balding businessman type, who carries an umbrella. While Fate and Duty work to see that a beautiful female jewl theif is apprehended by a detective, Venus and Cupid seek to blind the detective with love. For a change, Fate successfully completes his assignment, but unfortunately is largely absent from most of the story, as the Cupid/Duty rivalry carries most of the action. With this issue, the Man in Black once again disappeared from the comic stands.

Seven years later, Fate returned in Thrill-O-Rama #1, Oct., 1965. The cover proclaimed, "proudly presents The Man in Black called FATE!" No doubt about M.I.B.'s occupation this time. After the (Paul Reinman-Chick Stone?) cover, showing Fate, arms outstretched dramatically over Saladin, a bound girl in a slab of clay (honest) and three flying "Hate Cupids" as the blurb described them; inside was a splash reprint of page one from MIB #1, and a return of the "This is How It Might Have Happened" from MIB #3. The only new story, inexplicably entitled "The Hate Cupids," has the Weaver and Fate trying to bring sculptor Praextes and his daughter to "Valhalla." Venus and Cupid intervene to save them.



Just as Fate prepares to clobber them in revenge, the Weaver appears and informs him that she's made "a dreadful mistake." Praextes and his daughter are not yet due to die. The remainder of Thrill-O-Rama consists of routine SF stories. One suspects that "The Hate Cupids" was an inventory story from the fifties, although Bob Powell was working for Harvey editor Joe Simon in 1967, and could conceivably have drawn the tale new.

However, in Thrill-O-Rama #2, Harvey "fearlessly" (the adjective is unintentionally ironic) presents Pirana, an absurd Sub-Mariner/Aquaman copy, drawn by Jack Sparling. Sparling also contributes a five-page Man in Black story, "The Million Dollar Trap," in which Fate leads some greedy swindlers aboard the doomed Andrea Doria ocean liner. The art is quite good, so much so that one suspects Sparling worked from Powell's layouts. Though a Sparling Weaver story appeared in Thrill-O-Rama #3, the Man in Black had vanished once again. And with the unfortunate death of Bob Powell perhaps it would be in Fate's best interest to leave his adventures unrecorded in the pages of a comic magazine.

(All Characters Shown In This Article Are
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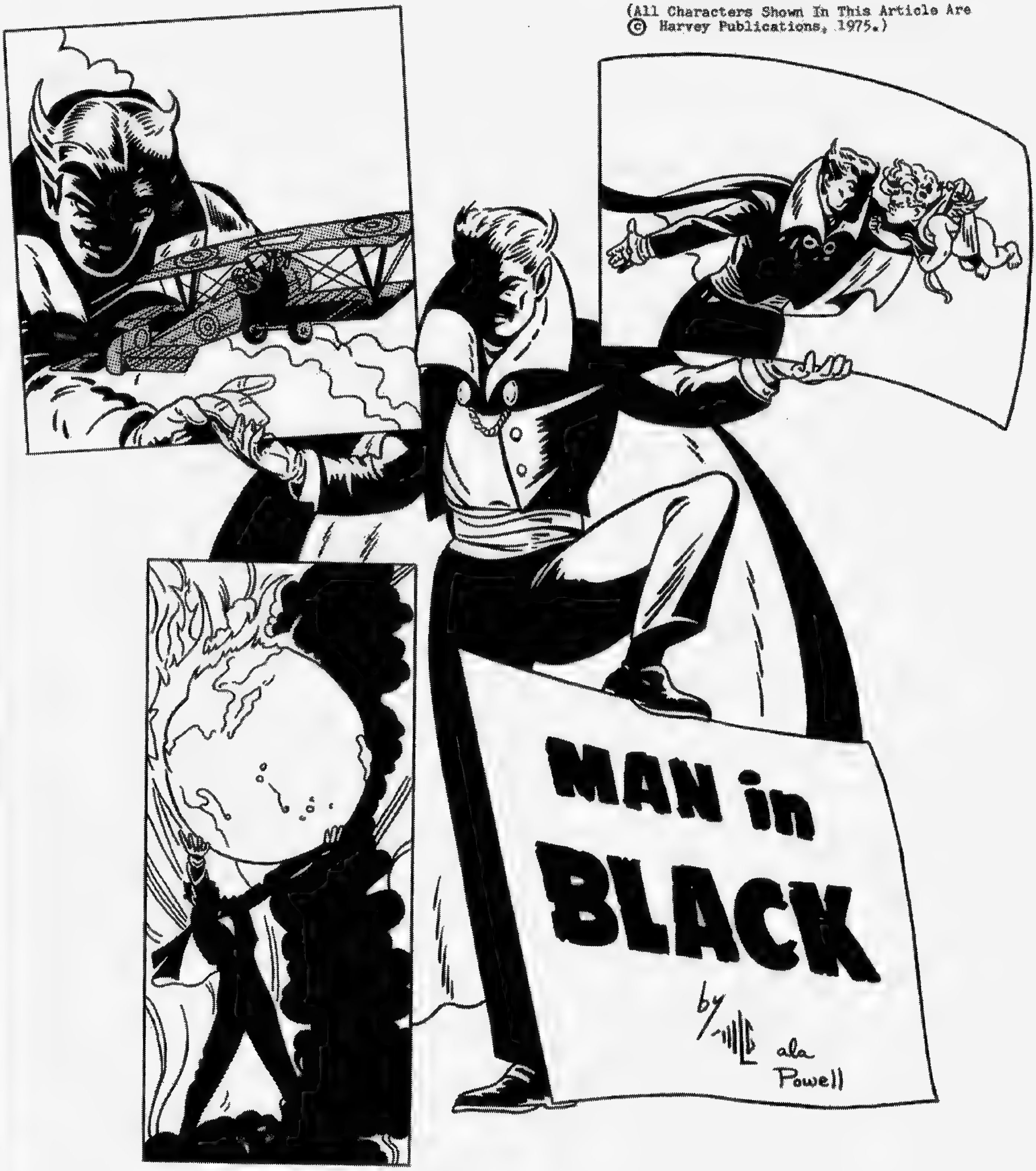

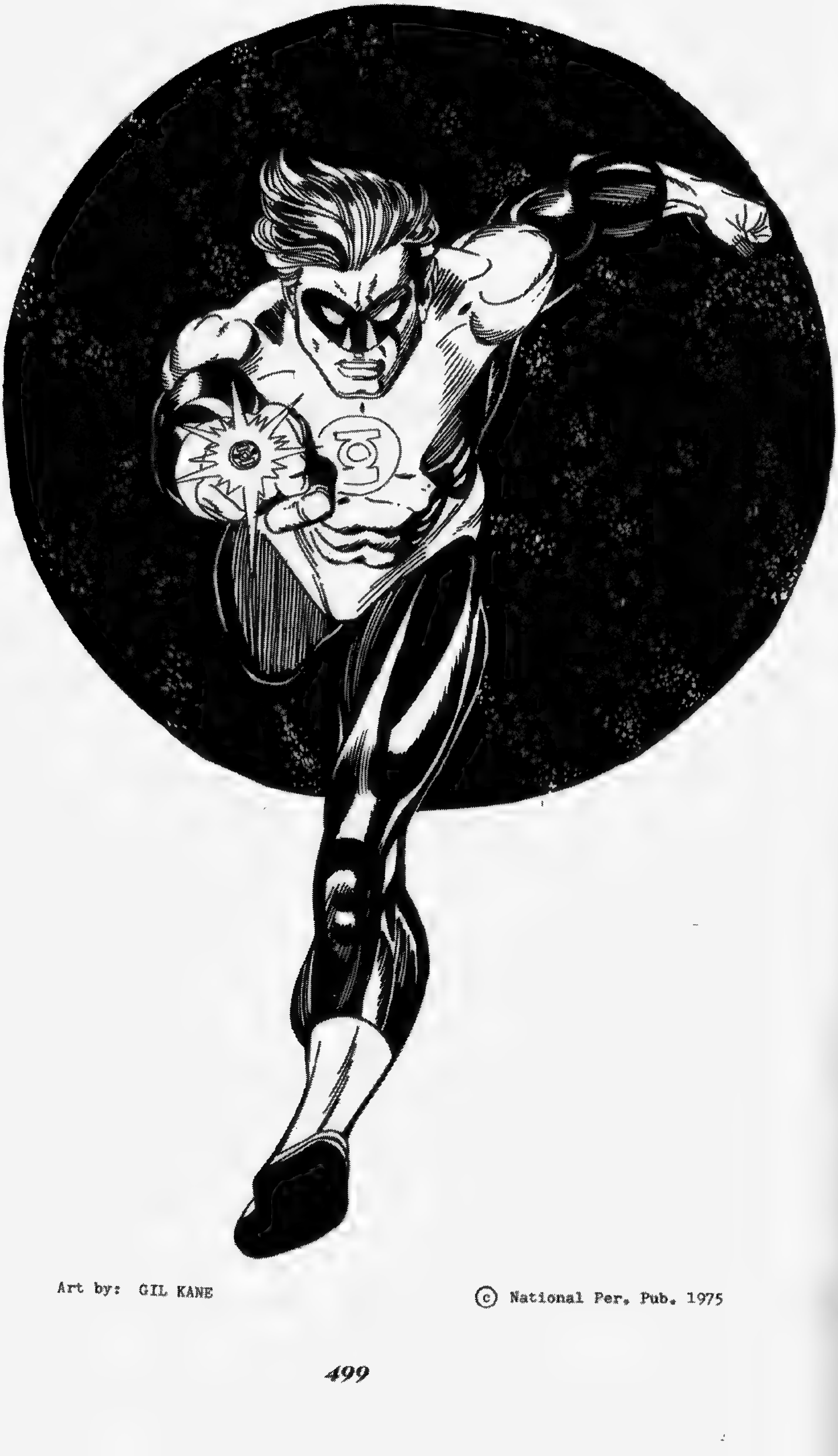

Art by: GIL KANE

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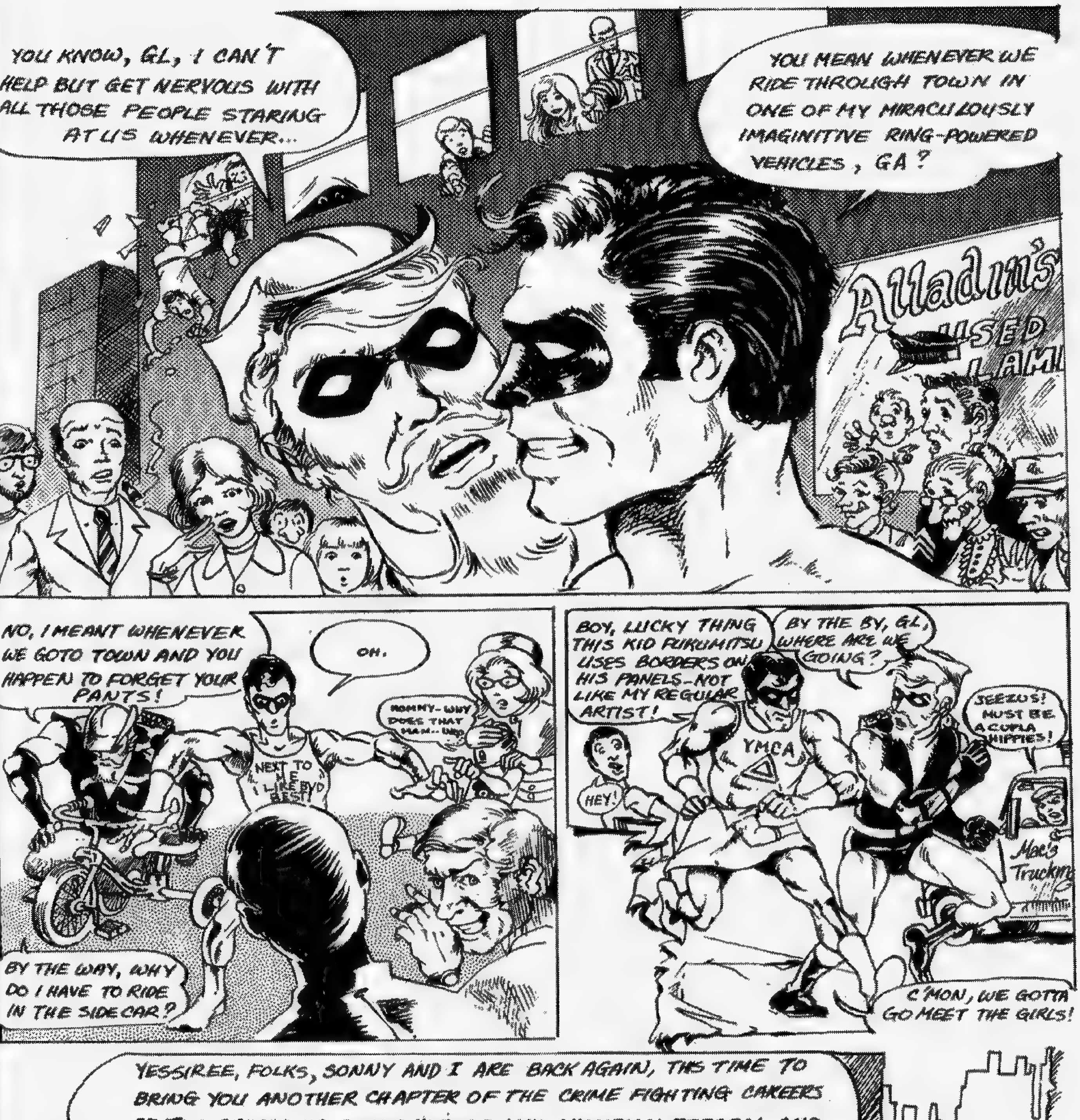
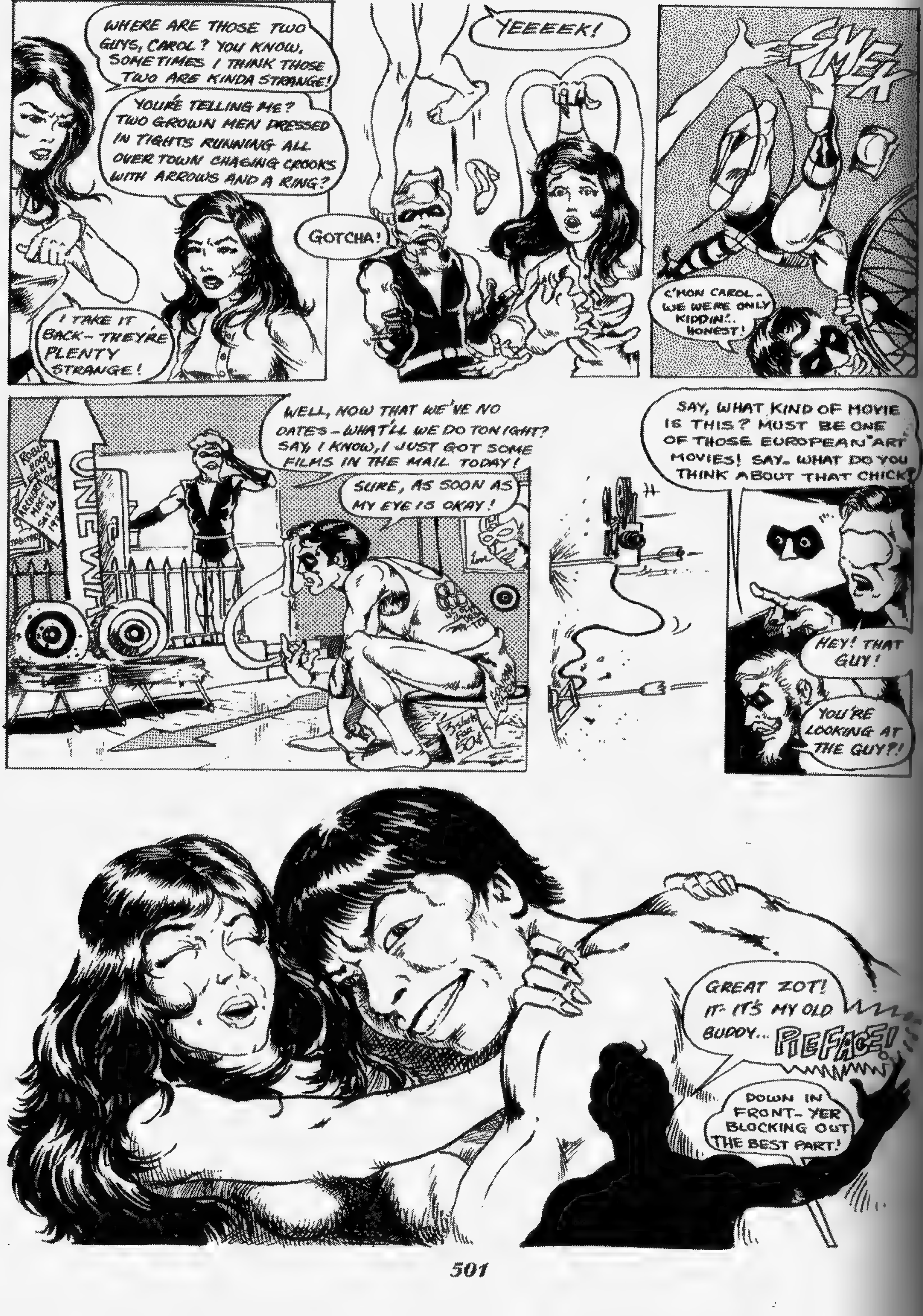
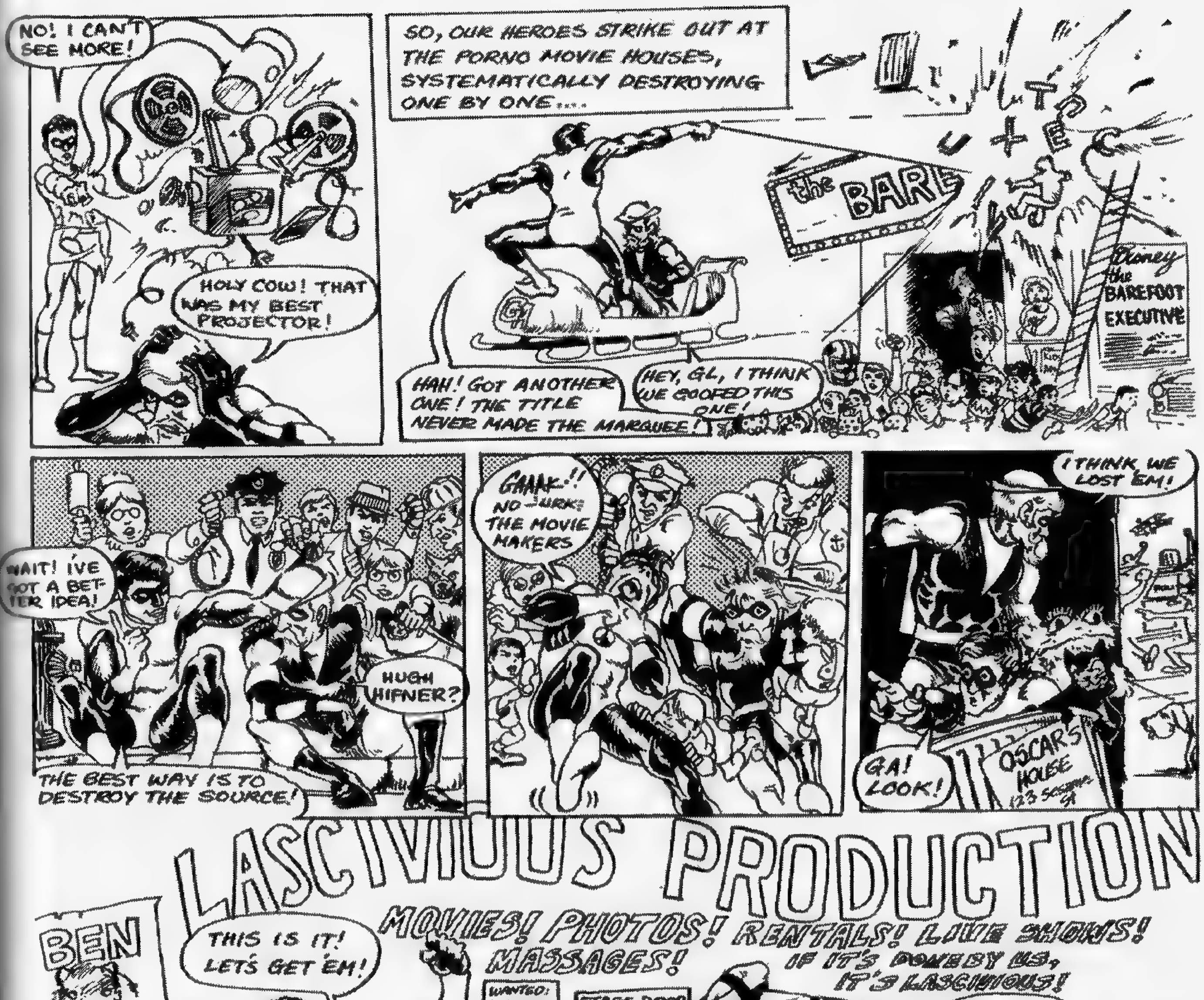
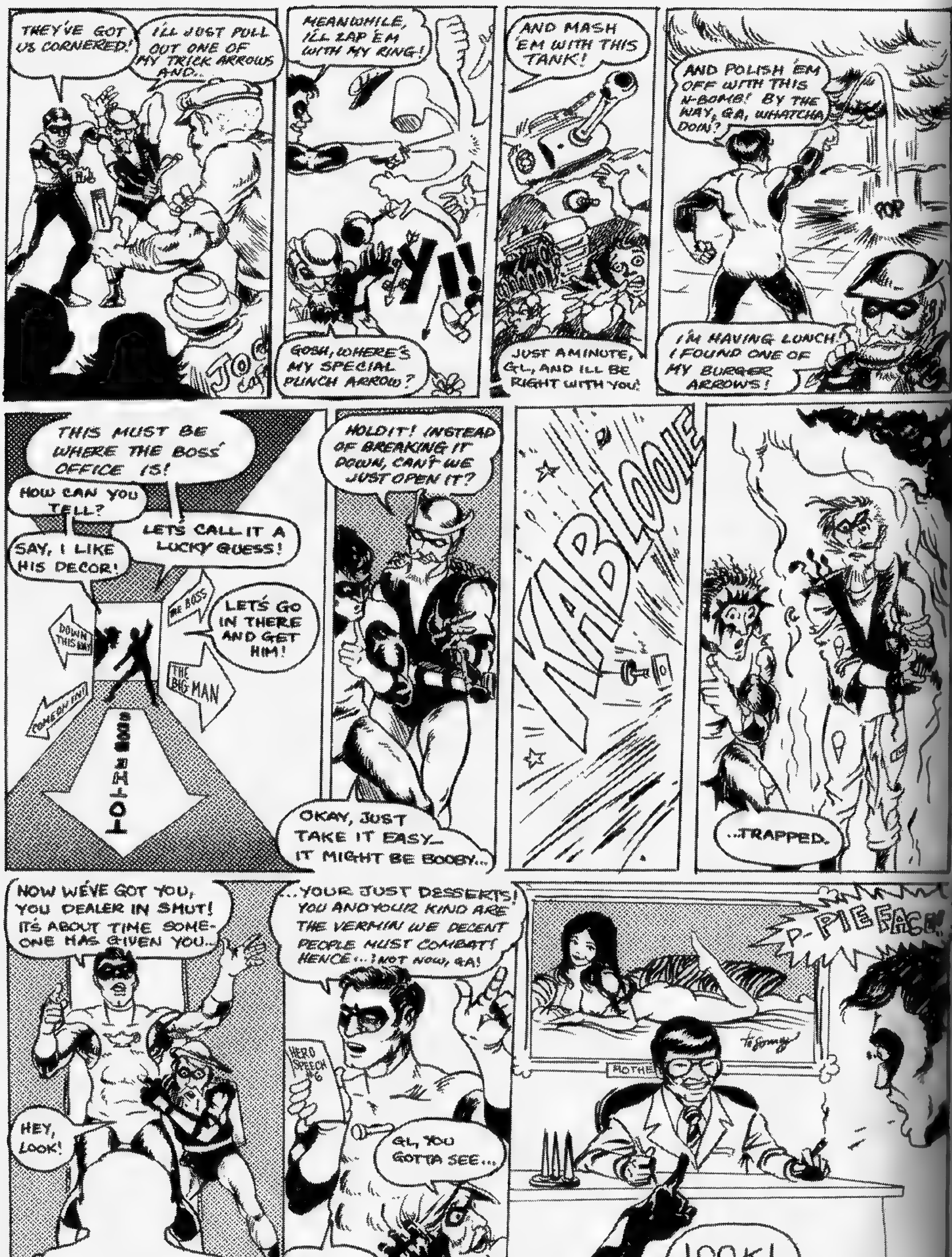


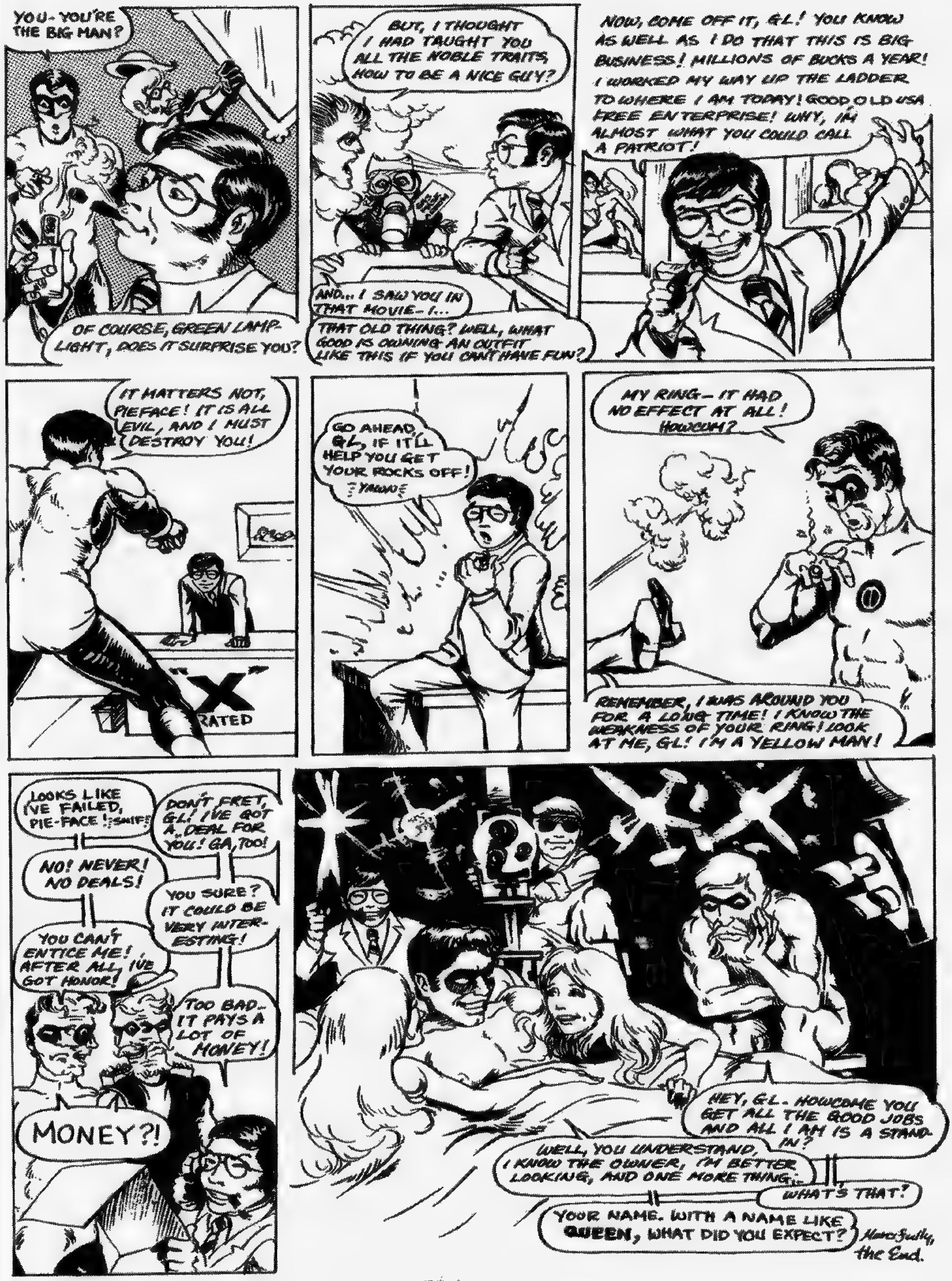
YOU KNOW, GL, I CAN'T HELP BUT GET NERVOUS WITH ALL THOSE PEOPLE STARING AT US WHENEVER...
YOU MEAN WHENEVER WE RIDE THROUGH TOWN IN ONE OF MY MIRACULOUSLY IMAGINITIVE RING-POWERED VEHICLES, GA?
ALLADIN'S USED LAM
NO, I MEANT WHENEVER WE GOTO TOWN AND YOU HAPPEN TO FORGET YOUR PANTS!
OH.
MOMMY- WHY DOES THAT MAN...
NEXT TO ME I LIKE BVD BEST!
BY THE WAY, WHY DO I HAVE TO RIDE IN THE SIDE CAR?
BOY, LUCKY THING THIS KID FUKUMITSU USES BORDERS ON HIS PANELS-NOT LIKE MY REGULAR ARTIST!
BY THE BY, GL, WHERE ARE WE GOING?
JEEZUS! MUST BE A CUPLA HIPPIES!
HEY!
YMCA
Mac's Truckin
C'MON, WE GOTTA GO MEET THE GIRLS!
YESSIREE, FOLKS, SONNY AND I ARE BACK AGAIN, THIS TIME TO BRING YOU ANOTHER CHAPTER OF THE CRIME FIGHTING CAREERS OF TWO CRUSADING SUPER HEROES WHO CHAMPION REFORM AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS! YES, YOU'RE RIGHT, KIDDIES_ NONE OTHER THAN THAT BIO-DEGRADABLE, HYPO-ALLERGENIC, SOCIALLY CONCIOUS, MORALLY FANATIC TWOSOME,→
GREEN LAMPLIGHT

ART BY: keith "the TOAD" fukumitsu STORY BY: keith fukumitsu * Gary Kato * Dennis Fujitake *


WHERE ARE THOSE TWO GUYS, CAROL? YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES I THINK THOSE TWO ARE KINDA STRANGE!
YOU'RE TELLING ME? TWO GROWN MEN DRESSED IN TIGHTS RUNNING ALL OVER TOWN CHASING CROOKS WITH ARROWS AND A RING?
I TAKE IT BACK- THEY'RE PLENTY STRANGE!
YEEEEK!
GOTCHA!
SMEK
C'MON CAROL.. WE WERE ONLY KIDDIN'!.. HONEST!
WELL, NOW THAT WE'VE NO DATES - WHAT'LL WE DO TONIGHT? SAY, I KNOW, I JUST GOT SOME FILMS IN THE MAIL TODAY!
SURE, AS SOON AS MY EYE IS OKAY!
ONE WAY
3 shots for 50¢
SAY, WHAT KIND OF MOVIE IS THIS? MUST BE ONE OF THOSE EUROPEAN "ART" MOVIES! SAY.. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT CHICK?
HEY! THAT GUY!
YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE GUY?!
GREAT ZOT! IT- IT'S MY OLD BUDDY... PIEFACE!
DOWN IN FRONT- YER BLOCKING OUT THE BEST PART!


NO! I CAN'T SEE MORE!
HOLY COW! THAT WAS MY BEST PROJECTOR!
SO, OUR HEROES STRIKE OUT AT THE PORNO MOVIE HOUSES, SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYING ONE BY ONE....
the BARE
U + E
Disney the BAREFOOT EXECUTIVE
HAH! GOT ANOTHER ONE! THE TITLE NEVER MADE THE MARQUEE!
HEY, GL, I THINK WE GOOFED THIS ONE!
WAIT! I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA!
HUGH HIFNER?
THE BEST WAY IS TO DESTROY THE SOURCE!
GAAK!! NO -URK- THE MOVIE MAKERS
I THINK WE LOST 'EM!
GA! LOOK!
OSCAR'S HOUSE 123 Sesame St
LASCIVIUUS PRODUCTION
MOVIES! PHOTOS! RENTALS! LIVE SHOWS! MASSAGES!
IF IT'S DONE BY US, IT'S LASCIVIOUS!
BEN
THIS IS IT! LET'S GET 'EM!
GET 'EM BEN!
WANTED: 1 BURRO 2 SNAKES 5 PONIES 7 SHEEP
STAGE DOOR
WE CATER: BIRTHDAY PARTIES LUNCHEONS BAR MITZVAHS CHINESE NEW YEARS.
I'LL JUST BREAK THE DOOR DOWN WITH A BIG SHOULDER SMASH!
SPLAT
IT DIDN'T WORK! MAYBE...
OOO! HEY...
BACKFLIP!
MUNCH
MAYBE IF I OPEN THE...
TWO FISTED DOUBLE ARM FRONTAL SLAMM
...DOOR.
CAN'T DALLY, OILY! WE'VE GOT TO FIND THE BRAINS OF THE OPERATION!
DIRECTOR
WON'T THE BODY DO INSTEAD?
YEAH, GL, COME BACK LATER! NOW, BEAUTIFUL, HOWS ABOUT A DATE?
*$@!?#!


THEY'VE GOT US CORNERED!
I'LL JUST PULL OUT ONE OF MY TRICK ARROWS AND...
JO
MEANWHILE, I'LL ZAP 'EM WITH MY RING!
YI!!
GOSH, WHERE'S MY SPECIAL PUNCH ARROW?
AND MASH 'EM WITH THIS TANK!
JUST A MINUTE, GL, AND I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU!
AND POLISH 'EM OFF WITH THIS N-BOMB! BY THE WAY, GA, WHATCHA DOIN'?
POP
I'M HAVING LUNCH! I FOUND ONE OF MY BURGER ARROWS!
THIS MUST BE WHERE THE BOSS' OFFICE IS!
HOW CAN YOU TELL?
LET'S CALL IT A LUCKY GUESS!
SAY, I LIKE HIS DECOR!
DOWN THIS WAY
THE BOSS
LET'S GO IN THERE AND GET HIM!
THE BIG MAN
COME ON IN!
TO THE BOSS
HOLD IT! INSTEAD OF BREAKING IT DOWN, CAN'T WE JUST OPEN IT?
OKAY, JUST TAKE IT EASY... IT MIGHT BE BOOBY...
KABLOOIE
...TRAPPED.
NOW WE'VE GOT YOU, YOU DEALER IN SMUT! IT'S ABOUT TIME SOMEONE HAS GIVEN YOU...
HEY, LOOK!
...YOUR JUST DESSERTS! YOU AND YOUR KIND ARE THE VERMIN WE DECENT PEOPLE MUST COMBAT! HENCE... NOT NOW, GA!
HERO SPEECH #6
GL, YOU GOTTA SEE...
WHAT IS IT?
P-PIEFACE!
MOTHE
LOOK!

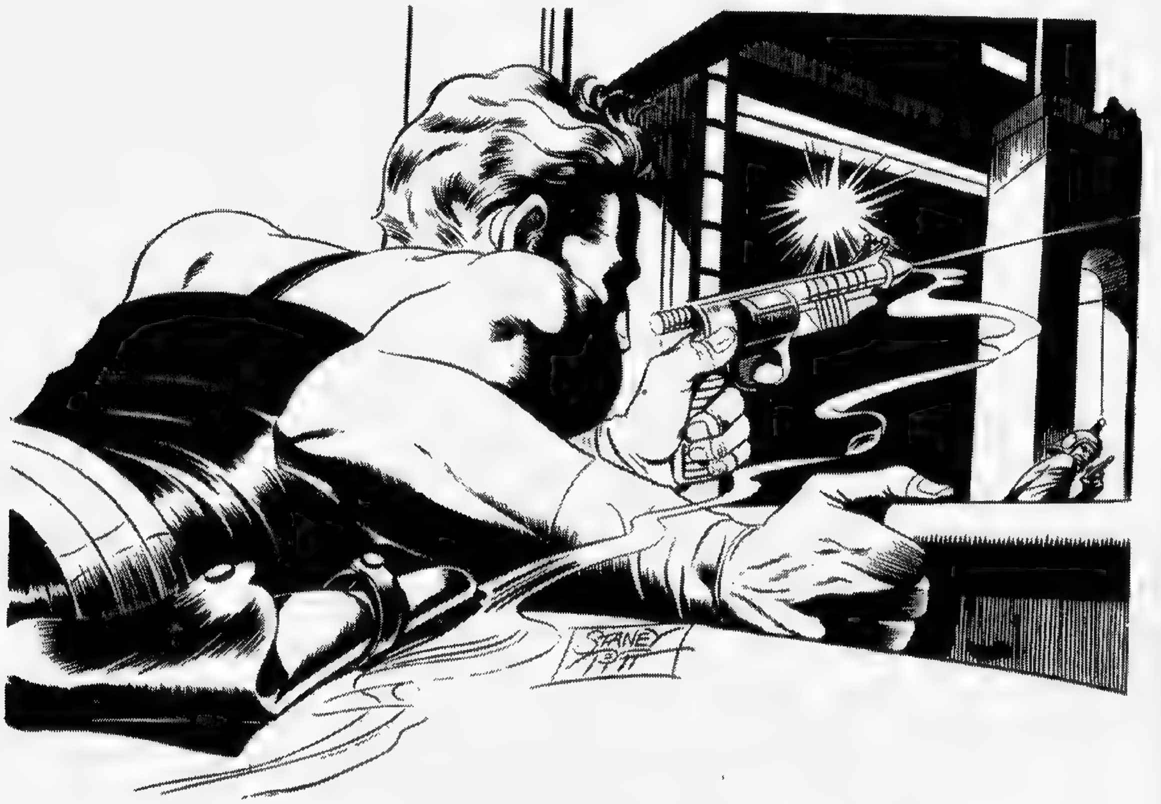

YOU- YOU'RE THE BIG MAN?
OF COURSE, GREEN LAMP-LIGHT, DOES IT SURPRISE YOU?
BUT, I THOUGHT I HAD TAUGHT YOU ALL THE NOBLE TRAITS, HOW TO BE A NICE GUY?
AND... I SAW YOU IN THAT MOVIE- I...
THAT OLD THING? WELL, WHAT GOOD IS OWNING AN OUTFIT LIKE THIS IF YOU CAN'T HAVE FUN?
NOW, COME OFF IT, GL! YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT THIS IS BIG BUSINESS! MILLIONS OF BUCKS A YEAR! I WORKED MY WAY UP THE LADDER TO WHERE I AM TODAY! GOOD OLD USA FREE ENTERPRISE! WHY, I'M ALMOST WHAT YOU COULD CALL A PATRIOT!
IT MATTERS NOT, PIEFACE! IT IS ALL EVIL, AND I MUST DESTROY YOU!
"X" RATED
GO AHEAD, GL, IF IT'LL HELP YOU GET YOUR ROCKS OFF!
YAWN
MY RING- IT HAD NO EFFECT AT ALL! HOWCOM?
REMEMBER, I WAS AROUND YOU FOR A LONG TIME! I KNOW THE WEAKNESS OF YOUR RING! LOOK AT ME, GL! I'M A YELLOW MAN!
LOOKS LIKE I'VE FAILED, PIE-FACE! SNIFF
DON'T FRET, GL! I'VE GOT A DEAL FOR YOU! GA, TOO!
NO! NEVER! NO DEALS!
YOU SURE? IT COULD BE VERY INTERESTING!
YOU CAN'T ENTICE ME! AFTER ALL I'VE GOT HONOR!
TOO BAD.. IT PAYS A LOT OF MONEY!
MONEY?!
HEY, GL.. HOWCOME YOU GET ALL THE GOOD JOBS AND ALL I AM IS A STAND-IN?
WELL, YOU UNDERSTAND, I KNOW THE OWNER, I'M BETTER LOOKING, AND ONE MORE THING...
WHAT'S THAT?
YOUR NAME. WITH A NAME LIKE QUEEN, WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?
Marc Scully,
the End.

INTERVIEW:

STAN PITT

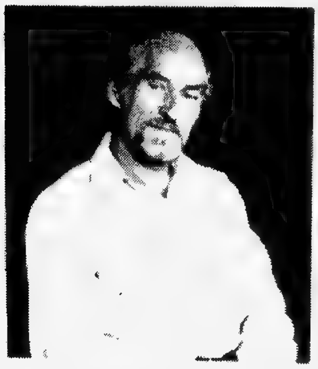
by

JOHN SNOWDEN



Stan Pitt is one of Australia's foremost illustrators. America has been fortunate to view his work, every so often, when he's filled in for Al Williamson on his Secret Agent Corrigan newspaper strip, done a sf strip for DC and had various pieces of his work published in fanzines. I am honored to present this fine interview by John Snowden and to print for the first time an unpublished Gully Foyle page by Stan Pitt. - MLG

*NOTE: Special thanks to John Ryan for help in proof reading and making available many of the illustrations to accompany this article. Thanks also to Martin Greim for making this space available.



STAN PITT

JS: Could you give me some details of your early life — how did you become interested in art and drawing?

SP: I was always interested in art as far back as I can remember. My earliest drawings were of cowboys — I think I was about 5 or 6 years old. I remember I was always getting into trouble at school for drawing when I should have been busy with my lessons, so I suppose it could be predicted that I would one day become a comic artist.

JS: What comics did you admire?

SP: I was first captivated by Mandrake the Magician, then came Superman and Tarzan. My favorite comic books of the late '30's and early '40's were Action and Adventure from DC.

JS: When did you first start to become interested in Alex Raymond?

SP: When I was about 14 or 15.

JS: You saw the Sunday pages?

SP: I saw a page and was really knocked out — you know, I just could not believe it; it was so magnificent; so far above everything I'd ever seen. So I devoted the next 5 or 6 years to studying the style.

JS: How did you study the style? By drawing pictures of anatomy etc?

SP: First of all I drew a few pages — rather, I should say copied them, just to get the feel of the strip. Of course, I realised copying other peoples work would get me nowhere, so I tried to absorb it — look at the thing and try to make something out of it along the same style. In time, it all began to fall into place...I found myself and began to develop ideas of my own.

JS: You must have had a very great natural ability for art...

SP: I had a very great natural love for art — it doesn't extend much beyond that.

JS: Did you ever have any kind of formal education in art?

SP: No, nothing — just looking and absorbing.

JS: What company are you working for at the moment?

SP: Cleveland Press.

JS: The paintings for those soft cover western paperbacks?

SP: Yes.

JS: Have you ever thought of doing any comic work again?

SP: Yes, I'm very interested in doing Gully Foyle again...but this time it will be for my own satisfaction, just for a private hobby.

JS: Do you think it would ever get published?

SP: I don't think I'd ever get the money for it — for that reason I wouldn't have any motive in doing it commercially.

JS: Would you be able to give me the story behind Gully Foyle?

SP: Well, I think that's just about been done to death... all this information is rather tedious to go over because it was quite a traumatic experience for us. We were so set on getting it syndicated only to discover that Alfred Bester had sold the property out from underneath us. It was a pretty hard break. It cost my brother, Reg, quite a bit of money...somewhere around $3000 to get established. We had to have an office/studio for us all to work etc. and there were all sorts of hidden expenses not to mention the cost of postings to Syndicates all over the world. It was quite a thing to get blown out in the end. All the first postings we made to the Syndicates were of expensive bromides mounted on heavy board, designed and made by Reg to accomodate all 15 pages. He was determined to give Gully Foyle the finest possible presentation. The postage and insurance for these cost around $80 per box. (What fools we mortals be!) Reg and I are great believers in quality. We didn't want success for nothing. We wanted to earn it. The boxes were elaborately beautiful affairs which reminded one of the Sarcophagus of Tutankhumun.

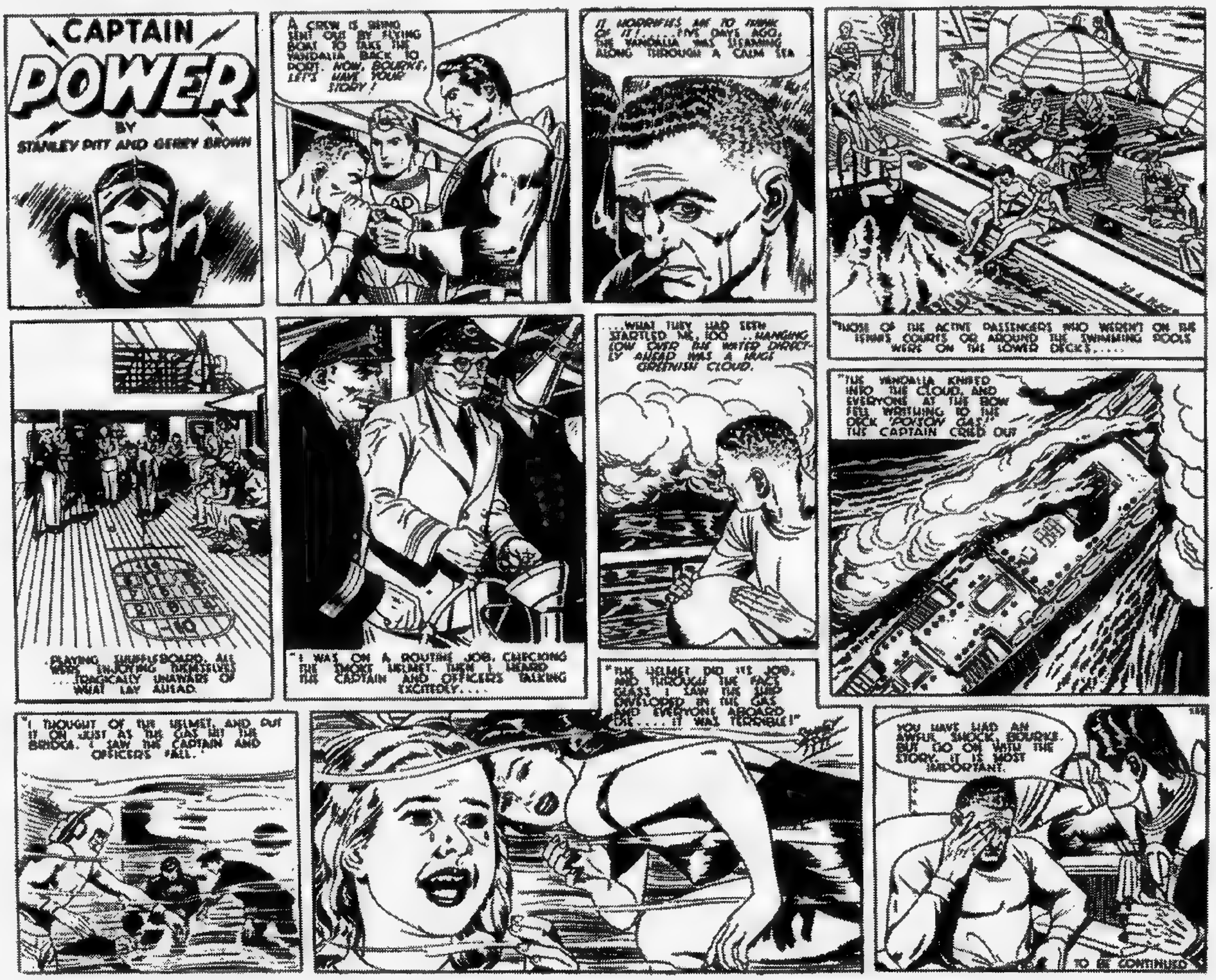
JS: How did you become interested in Gully Foyle?

SP: Well, Reg is a sf buff from way back and he discovered this story about 15 years ago, not long after it first came out...and right from the first time he read it he said, "This thing is great, it's a natural for your art...what you've been looking for, waiting for." He was convinced, but it took a long time, about 5 or 6 years, to get into it. We never lost interest. I think we did about 15 original pages before we tried anything...we wanted to get this much ahead in case we had any good fortune. And then we met John Ryan who decided to send it overseas to a place where he thought would be a good venue for it. We had no luck there so we tried 5 or 6 others and one of them, Ledger Syndicate, was very interested. The only thing was that we had to redraw the pages because we had a format that was unsuitable for the modern newspaper breakdowns — so we went through it, again, redrawing everything. The President of Ledger Syndicate, John Higgins, finally sold it to 50 newspapers in America — and then we got the news that we couldn't use it because Alfred Bester had sold the rights to Ashley Famous Agency in New York. John Ryan wrote to them and asked if it was possible to continue with the strip — but the company didn't want to sell it this way. They thought it might ruin the chances of selling it as a film or TV property and that if it went into comics it might destroy the interest. So, that was the end of that! Anyway, they'll probably never make it into a film as, according to Reg, it'd cost them far too much to do it properly. You are familiar with the story?

JS: Oh, yes — it's just a shame that things folded right at the very end for you.

SP: It's a great story, isn't it? After all, we had just scratched the surface. We were going to go back over some of the first things we missed, introduce ideas like jaunting and things like that.

JS: Why wasn't the jaunting included in the original 15 pages?


CAPTAIN POWER
BY
STANLEY PITT AND GERRY BROWN
A CREW IS BEING SENT OUT BY FLYING BOAT TO TAKE THE VANDALIA BACK TO PORT. NOW, BOURKE, LET'S HAVE YOUR STORY!
IT HORRIFIES ME TO THINK OF IT!.....FIVE DAYS AGO, THE VANDALIA WAS STEAMING ALONG THROUGH A CALM SEA
"THOSE OF THE ACTIVE PASSENGERS WHO WEREN'T ON THE TENNIS COURTS OR AROUND THE SWIMMING POOLS WERE ON THE LOWER DECKS....
PLAYING SHUFFLEBOARD, ALL WERE ENJOYING THEMSELVES ....TRAGICALLY UNAWARE OF WHAT LAY AHEAD.
"I WAS ON A ROUTINE JOB, CHECKING THE SMOKE HELMET. THEN I HEARD THE CAPTAIN AND OFFICERS TALKING EXCITEDLY....
...WHAT THEY HAD SEEN STARTLED ME, TOO ...HANGING LOW OVER THE WATER DIRECTLY AHEAD WAS A HUGE GREENISH CLOUD.
"THE VANDALIA KNIFED INTO THE CLOUD, AND EVERYONE AT THE BOW FELL WRITHING TO THE DECK 'POISON GAS!' THE CAPTAIN CRIED OUT
"I THOUGHT OF THE HELMET, AND PUT IT ON JUST AS THE GAS HIT THE BRIDGE. I SAW THE CAPTAIN AND OFFICERS FALL."
"THE HELMET DID ITS JOB, AND THROUGH THE FACE GLASS I SAW THE SHIP ENVELOPED IN THE GAS AND EVERYONE ABOARD DIE.... IT WAS TERRIBLE!"
YOU HAVE HAD AN AWFUL SHOCK, BOURKE, BUT GO ON WITH THE STORY. IT IS MOST IMPORTANT.
TO BE CONTINUED

SP: We decided to skip it as we felt it might have been just a little bit too revolutionary...also, it was rather difficult to establish in drawings. So we were collating and putting ideas aside for the future, whereby this could be done. We could have depicted this type of idea. It's very hard — there's a lot of problems involved.

JS: How long did it take to do a page of Gully Foyle?

SP: I used to devote myself to it for the whole week. I'd taken 5-6 days for some of them.

JS: How did you do the geometric shapes and spirals that appear in some of the Gully Foyle pages?

SP: Well, Reg is very interested in photography and I think he put a ball on a string and spun it...photographing it with time exposure and getting those incredible spiral shapes. We tried to keep that a secret for a long time — make them wonder at the artist; some of them fell for it! John Ryan did; he couldn't believe it! He said, "Stan, your skill has just become enormous, the things that you can do now!"

JS: What was the first comic strip that you did?

SP: "Anthony Fury" when I was 16, followed by an investigator type strip, "Larry Flynn, Detective," which I did for Frank Johnson Pub. Co. when I was 17. Getting a comic sold here was in some ways a lot easier than in America. The money wasn't bad but the publishers were not as educated on comics, they sort of did it "tongue-in-cheek" — they didn't care much what it looked like so long as it made money. The American comics had stopped coming over here due to WW 2 and just about anything that they put on paper would sell. The comics were printed on different colored papers, even brown. Frank Johnson was a hard man—still we did get a break from him, getting something printed. He used to pay us $3.00 a page in the early years.

JS: Not much compared to today!

SP: In those days—let me tell you—you were uphill trying to live on it. I had to share mine, as I had a friend writing for me.

JS: Who was the writer?

SP: Frank Ashely.

JS: He wrote most of "Yarmak".

SP: Originally I had two dozen copies of "Yarmak" — but I've been giving them away ever since I met John Ryan—there's been so many fans since then. There was also a "Silver Starr" comic produced in full color. I had 50 copies of it. Al Williamson got the 2nd last, I had two and sent one away to him.

JS: I knew that there was 1/- color comic, a 6d series and a run that appeared in "King" comics.

SP: That's right, only one issue was printed in full color. 125,000 copies of the 1/- version were printed, expecting to sell the lot, but they only released 50,000 and lost money on it—a couple of thousand pounds I think. They sold 90% of the returns to Woolworth's or Coles for the Christmas stocking trade and got their money back. The rest filtered away to friends of the company and fans who would write requesting copies. The surprising thing is that when the publisher was going to America some years ago he thought that perhaps he might be able to interest somebody over there in "Silver Starr". So he went through his files for a copy and found nothing, not a thing. He had to come and get one out of my files!

JS: Who was the publisher?

SP: Jack Atkins, of Cleveland Pub. Co. I've been with them about 18 years doing mainly Western covers.

JS: I know that at the 1972 Melbourne Eastercon they auctioned off a color copy of "Silver Starr" and it sold for $20.

SP: $20!! You've got to be kidding! What do you think about that?

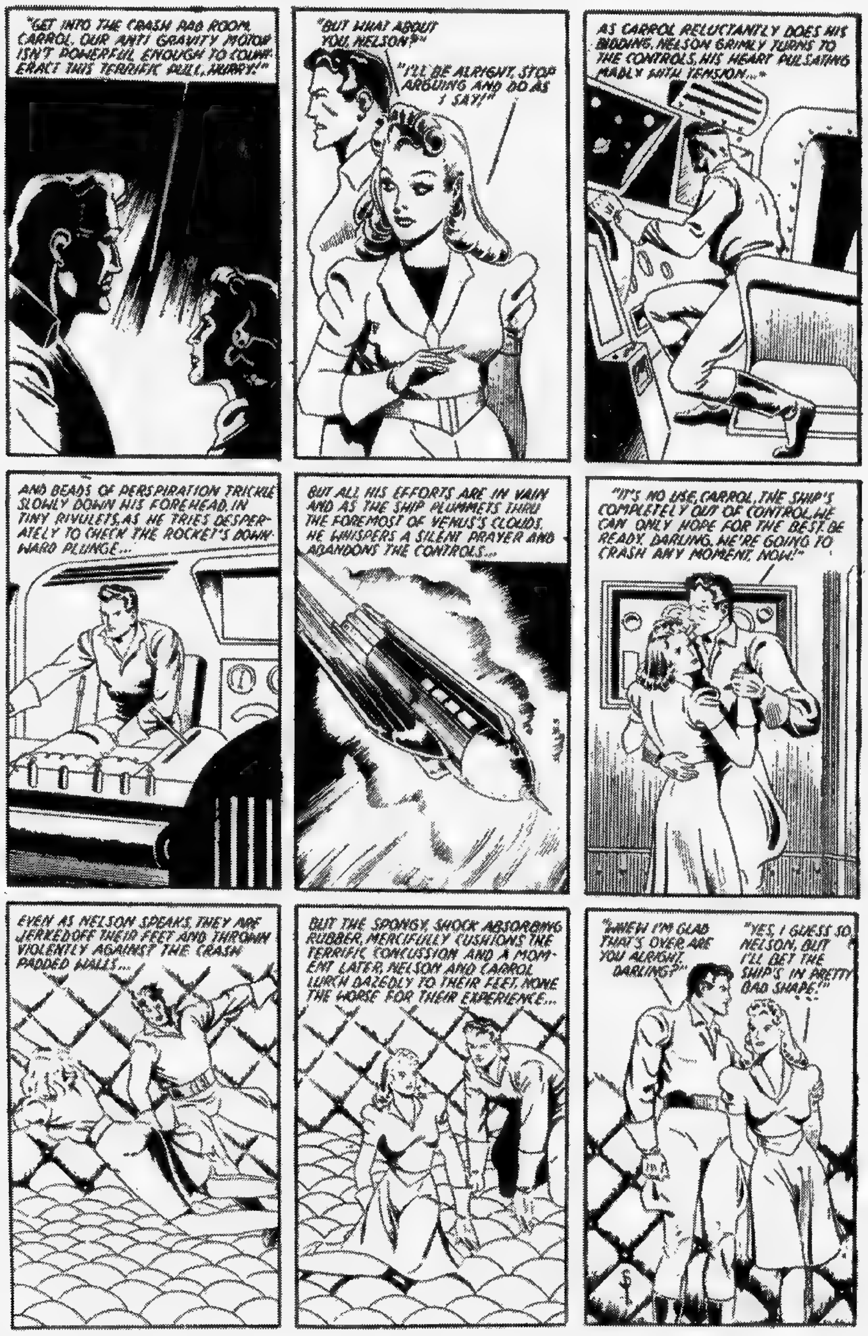
JS: It shows that some people have good taste!

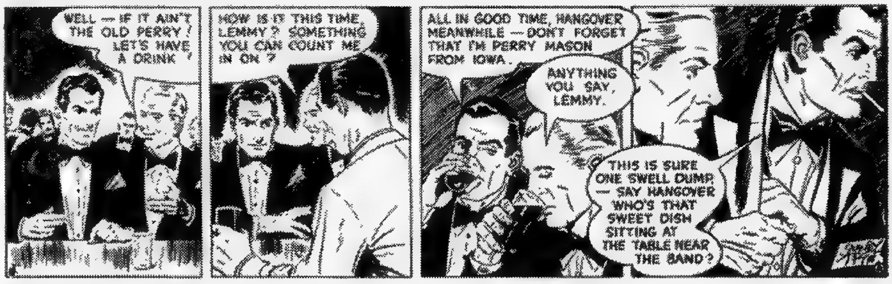
SP: I wish I'd known that years ago, it would have been more profitable to keep the copies! It truly amazes me!

JS: Back on Gully Foyle, how many sets of promotional pages were made up?

SP: Originally we had a 100 sets made and here again I have only one set left in my files. Reg and I had 25 sets apiece and John Ryan kept the rest for fans and in case something came up and somebody showed interest overseas. Eventually John got down to five, but John used his wisely, only good friends and fans who really appreciated Gully Foyle were given sets. In the main, Reg and I squandered ours by giving them to people with only a random interest in comics. I remember one night particularly when I was talking about Gully Foyle to the taxi cab driver on the way home from Cleveland. He seemed interested so I presented him with a set—he probably threw it out of the cab before he got half way

Page from UNIVERSAL CONQUEST


"GET INTO THE CRASH PAD ROOM, CARROL, OUR ANTI GRAVITY MOTOR ISN'T POWERFUL ENOUGH TO COUNTERACT THIS TERRIFIC PULL, HURRY!"
"BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, NELSON?"
"I'LL BE ALRIGHT, STOP ARGUING AND DO AS I SAY!"
AS CARROL RELUCTANTLY DOES HIS BIDDING, NELSON GRIMLY TURNS TO THE CONTROLS, HIS HEART PULSATING MADLY WITH TENSION..."
AND BEADS OF PERSPIRATION TRICKLE SLOWLY DOWN HIS FOREHEAD, IN TINY RIVULETS, AS HE TRIES DESPERATELY TO CHECK THE ROCKET'S DOWNWARD PLUNGE...
BUT ALL HIS EFFORTS ARE IN VAIN AND AS THE SHIP PLUMMETS THRU THE FOREMOST OF VENUS'S CLOUDS, HE WHISPERS A SILENT PRAYER AND ABANDONS THE CONTROLS...
"IT'S NO USE, CARROL, THE SHIP'S COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL, WE CAN ONLY HOPE FOR THE BEST. BE READY, DARLING, WE'RE GOING TO CRASH ANY MOMENT, NOW!"
EVEN AS NELSON SPEAKS, THEY ARE JERKEDOFF THEIR FEET AND THROWN VIOLENTLY AGAINST THE CRASH PADDED WALLS...
BUT THE SPONGY, SHOCK ABSORBING RUBBER, MERCIFULLY CUSHIONS THE TERRIFIC CONCUSSION AND A MOMENT LATER, NELSON AND CARROL LURCH DAZEDLY TO THEIR FEET, NONE THE WORSE FOR THEIR EXPERIENCE...
"WHEW I'M GLAD THAT'S OVER, ARE YOU ALRIGHT, DARLING?"
"YES, I GUESS SO, NELSON, BUT I'LL BET THE SHIP'S IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE!"


LEMMY CAUTION By PETER CHEYNEY

WELL — IF IT AIN'T THE OLD PERRY! LET'S HAVE A DRINK!
HOW IS IT THIS TIME, LEMMY? SOMETHING YOU CAN COUNT ME IN ON?
ALL IN GOOD TIME, HANGOVER. MEANWHILE — DON'T FORGET THAT I'M PERRY MASON FROM IOWA.
ANYTHING YOU SAY, LEMMY.
THIS IS SURE ONE SWELL DUMP — SAY HANGOVER WHO'S THAT SWEET DISH SITTING AT THE TABLE NEAR THE BAND?

down the street!

JS: I knew that at one of the US conventions (Dallas) they used Gully Foyle as promotion. Did you know that?

SP: No! Although I do know that in Los Angles or somewhere they had a convention about 5 years back, and one of the sets that John had sent over there in goodwill to a fan was put up for auction and brought $35! Incidently we only paid $80 for the whole 100 sets.

JS: How did the "Jungle King" comic fit into the saga of "Yarmak, The Fearless One"?

SP: Just before I finished doing "Yarmak", the title changed into "Jungle King" with original stories. "Jungle King" then started reprinting previous "Yarmak" stories, picking up at number thirty where "Yarmak" had originally left off. The reprints incidently, were in no order whatsoever. Altogether there were 32 original stories, a lot of them are very poorly inked as you probably know.

JS: Who did the inking on them?

SP: I had three people, all friends of mine--Paul Wheelahan and the Ashely brothers (Frank and Jay).

JS: I know Paul Wheelahan mainly from his work on The Panther and The Raven.

SP: Paul works for the same company as myself--he writes Western novels now. He's been doing that for about ten years now. He writes the novels and I do the covers.

JS: You don't sign your covers, do you?

SP: No, I never sign them--that's against the policy of the company. The idea being that if you do sign them people will know who you are--then they can contact you and the company might lose you.

JS: What are some of the other early strips you did?

SP: Universal Conquest--that was a good one for the period. It was a bit before "Silver Starr". I didn't know anything about publishing in those days, so I decided to do the thing in full color. I later learned that Universal Conquest was unpublishable because I had not done the color on overlay sheets. So I kept the pages all these years up until 2 or 3 years ago when I happened to mention it to Al Williamson in one of my letters. Sometime later Al asked if I could send it over to him and he would try to fine a publisher, and so he did. As far as I'm concerned, Al is the finest artist in the business and his kindness equals his talent.

JS: Do you know who's going to publish it?

SP: Doug Murray will publish it, but alas I don't know when. I've had this thing in my files for 30 odd years and now at last I can look forward to seeing it published in the near future. There are some very good panels in Universal Conquest and some of the drawing is so good that I doubt that I could equal it today.

JS: How many pages is the strip?

SP: The whole thing is about 60 pages and in full color. It's just a matter of time now. It'll be interesting to see just how well it comes out.

JS: What about some of your other early work.

SP: I also did "Captain Justice"...No, not the same one as Monty Wedd's--in fact, I'm damn sure he pinched the name as we were very early in with it. Our Capt. Justice was a swashbuckler-Barbary Coast style; in short, a pirate. Also Adrian Allis-Adventure. We were fascinated, like everyone else at that time, by The Phantom and we came up with this strip which let to other ideas--The Spector and Captain Fury. We liked Jungle Jim and this strip led to the creation of Jim Atlas. But they were all drawn after the first few years of selling my first strip--Anthony Fury. Then came Silver Starr and the happiest three years of my life. Yarmak was next and after this I had a few attempts at dailies. Mr. Midnight and Lemmy Caution (on which Reg collaborated), for the Press Feature Service, but these stories were unsuccessful. They made a sale for the Lemmy Caution story to the French newspapers but it wasn't enough to pay the bills--so they had to drop it.

JS: Artists in Australia seem to have a hard time getting anything published in America.

SP: That certainly seems to be the case. John Dixon's not had much good fortune in the US.

JS: Years ago, we had an industry that could hold its own anywhere in the world.

SP: Indeed we did--but I doubt that any of us ever thought of it quite that way. We were all very young, not much interested in the Industry's history, only enjoying every minute of it and hoping that it would last forever.

JS: Do you think that comic strips will ever pay well enough to become commercially viable and produce great works of art?

SP: As a young man I had an overpowering desire to become a great artist, and this desire becomes more urgent with the passing of time. Very few artists ever produce great art commercially. The reasons for this are that the rewards for art in Australia and elsewhere are mostly low and the deadlines constant. In my case I work 2 days to produce one cover and the reward is $A60. If I take three days or even a week, it will still be $60. For this reason, the struggle an artist has to reach perfection in his work becomes frustrated into a struggle to make money to survive.

JS: When you drew Gully Foyle, how did you plan the pages out?

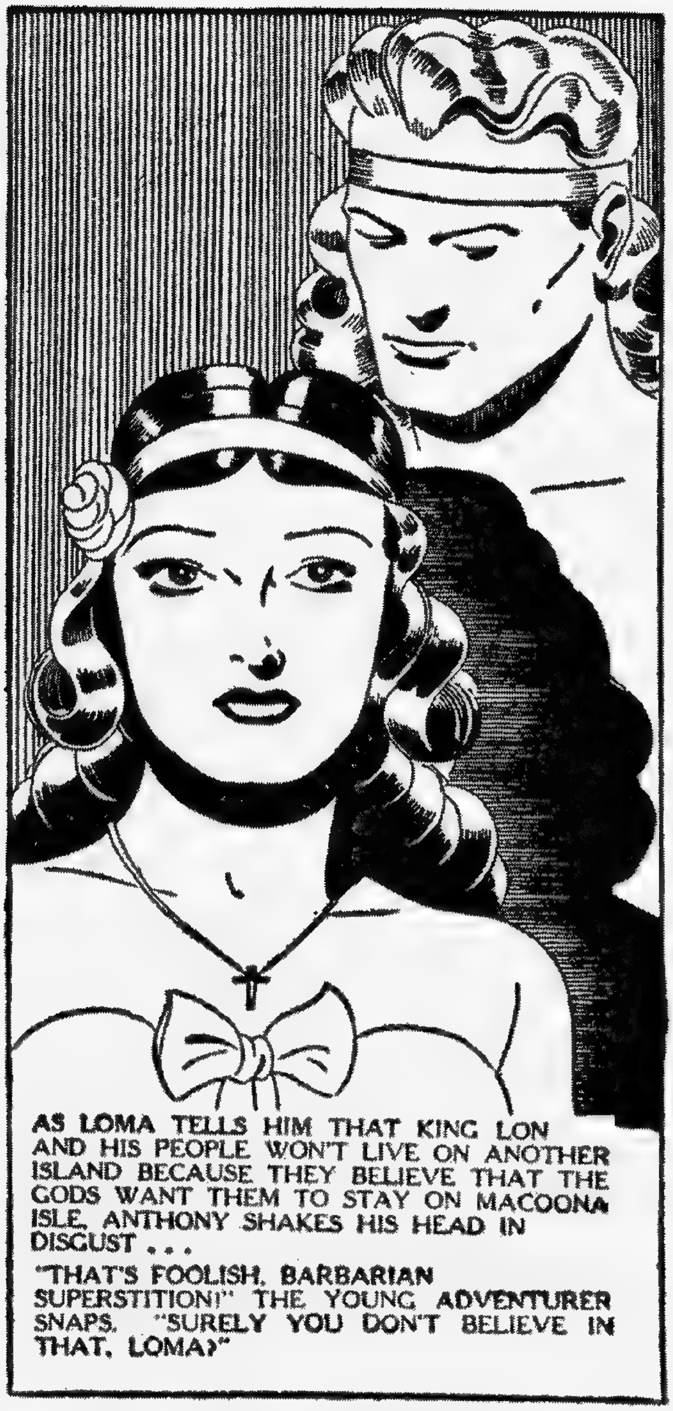
SP: My brother Reg did most of the planning. We have a great empathy--he seems to know just how much space is needed and an uncanny ability to percieve what I will do with it. On some pages I really only drew three out of the 5 or 6 panels. The drawing of Gully Foyle in the light pattern (GF page 7) is the negative of the original that you see. This was pasted onto the photograph and some work was done to it, mainly with white ink, to get the effect a little more strongly than we had it originally and also the second picture was done in the same way. The space ships were drawn on seperate paper, trimmed and pasted down and a little more work was done to make it appear more natural. But you've got to have this mechanical type finish for an SF strip.

JS: What would be your own favorite strip?

SP: Yarmak, I never really got around to putting any really fine work into it but I had a lot of fun.

JS: A few years ago you did some work for D.C. and Western Pub. in America (Midnight Witching Hour #14 and Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery #33), --have you ever thought of doing any more?

Stan holding Gully Foyle Page


AS LOMA TELLS HIM THAT KING LON AND HIS PEOPLE WON'T LIVE ON ANOTHER ISLAND BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THAT THE GODS WANT THEM TO STAY ON MACOONA ISLE, ANTHONY SHAKES HIS HEAD IN DISGUST . . .
"THAT'S FOOLISH, BARBARIAN SUPERSTITION!" THE YOUNG ADVENTURER SNAPS. "SURELY YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN THAT, LOMA?"

Panel from Anthony Fury

SP: Not unless I could get $100 a page, so there is not much hope is there? You see there is quite a lot of difficulty in working with editors at long distance. The trouble is particularly with manuscripts. The editors may think they are good but the artist may have alternative ideas and since they don't approve with tampering, one must press on with the job. What I would like to do is get some regular paperback cover work from America and in the short space of a year we could pull up our ties and get over there and then I could really become involved in comics. Also the exchange rate works against you when you receive a check from America ($100 US becomes approx $67). It would be great to meet Al and Arlene Williamson. They are two of the best people I know. I must tell you a little story John. Two or Three years ago Al sent an eight page SF comic script for me to do for some publisher in New York. I finished the work in a month or so and parceled it back. Al's personal check for $400 arrived a fortnight later. In the following months I asked Al many times for a publishing date, but his letter never conveyed an answer. It must have been a year later that he finally admitted that the publisher (Berni Wrightson) had gone out of business and that he had payed for the comic out of his own pocket, rather than disappoint me. I was not to worry because he was glad to have the comic himself. One of these days he will find a spot for it and anything over $400 that he gets for it is mine. I think that will give you some idea of Al's character.

JS: How did you come to meet Al Williamson?

SP: I didn't, as a matter of fact! (Stan ducked out of the room and appeared a moment later with one of the Nostalgia Press volumes of Flash Gordon). It all started with a Melbourne bloke, Alan Tompkins by name, who did a little fanzine—very beautiful production too. Tompkins was primarily a Burroughs fan but also an admirer of Al Williamson to whom he sent a copy of the zine and this is how Al became aware of me. I had become aware of him through his comic work but had no personal contact with him and then one day—and you won't believe this, it was my birthday, the postman knocks and gives me a book... from America. I opened it and couldn't believe my eyes! Flash Gordon—I hadn't seen some of those pages in 30 years! The covering letter arrived a few days later (which went on to say that Al had seen Stan's work and having had a hand in the Nostalgia Press Flash Gordon books, had sent one over to him).

JS: It's rather incredible the way people refine and develop such style.

SP: That's one of the things about Raymond's art—he really did develop it! In fact he got some of his first inspirations from Gustave Dore—but what he did with it is quite remarkable! I know this for I've seen many Dore plates that Raymond actually had copied in the early days when he was just starting off.

JS: Have you, in any way been influenced by Dore?

SP: I suppose so, these things are always in the mind. You can't be exposed to a thing and not be affected by it. I'll show you some of my early attempts (Stan went out of the room and came back with a folder). Here's some of the things I did when I was a kid.

JS: This looks like an interesting strip, "The Death Pearl", how old would most of these be?

SP: About 30 years.

JS: The Raymond influence certainly shows through!

SP: Yes, even in the beginning, eh? But I did such long figures! I shudder just to look at them!

JS: "Silver Starr" was originally published in the Sydney Sunday Sun?

SP: Oh yes! That was a really big double page spread. You never saw it in its original form did you? (Stan went out and came back with a gigantic color proof of the first page of Silver Starr). They cut down the size a few times of course.

JS: How long did "Silver Starr" go for?

SP: Two years (November 24, 1946 - November 14, 1948), I resigned because they cut it down to such a squibby little size. It was fairly young to resign, only 22! I couldn't get any feeling out of it anymore. It was reduced to half the size of an average comic book page—trying to cram all those pictures into such a small space. They had newspaper difficulties in those days due to the war. I had to get out of it. I was putting just as much work into it but a lot of it was being lost as the reduction was too great. I did some of it four up. It's astonishing that it came out at all!

JS: You did all your own inking?

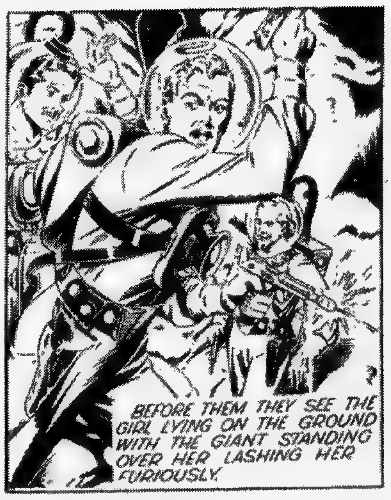
SP: Oh yes, on "Silver Starr" everything. The inking was done using a pen, I hadn't yet begun to use a brush. The nib of the mapping pen was filed down.

JS: When coloring, did you make a tracing?

SP: No, they used to get a bromide and I'd color that.

JS: What did you do the coloring with? Watercolor?

SP: Transparent inks. But I was disappointed! I used to love to put the ink straight onto the original drawing. It was very difficult to get a nice even texture on the bromide paper. It was so slippery, oily


BEFORE THEM THEY SEE THE GIRL LYING ON THE GROUND WITH THE GIANT STANDING OVER HER LASHING HER FURIOUSLY.

Silver Starr

and greasy. But still; they had a code for the colors so what I really wanted they could achieve. They were quite good about that.

JS: What do you think of comics today?

SP: I think they've deteriorated in an incredible way! It's a downslide. Not because of a lack of talent around, there's more competent people today than ever, but they just don't get the breaks anymore.

JS: What kind of comics would you like to see?

SP: Really great comics—comics that an artist can be proud of; putting any degree of time into and really be satisfied with what he's achieving. I don't think I'll ever see that.

JS: Getting away from the "production line" idea?

SP: Fill ins and the rest of it. "Let's get the page done!" Do one good picture and the rest just fill out because that is the way that it has to be done. The money's not there—and neither is the interest; you've got to have the interest.

JS: Did you know many of the other comic book artists of the period?

SP: Oh yes, John Dixon—I knew John quite well, Keith Chatto, Hart Amos and Phil Belbin of course.

JS: Who else did you admire when you were first starting off?

SP: Well, apart from Action and Adventure comics, the big interest was Raymond, Foster and Hogarth.

JS: What Hogarth did you see?

SP: Most of the Tarzan. But I always thought of him as third in the line. Raymond first, Foster second and then Hogarth, but now Al Williamson is number one.

JS: Can you tell me anything about the publishers of the day?

SP: Well, actually I was never on any personal relationships with them—you can imagine all you'd be interested in would be getting your money and seeing when the publication date was. You'd take your pages in and get away as fast as possible.

JS: None of them ever returned work to you?

SP: I've never had anything returned to me ever. I've asked a few times, but it's just not done.

JS: As I've said before, I can't get over the similarity between your own work and that of Alex Raymond's.

SP: Well, that was by design, you know about that. I wanted to be like Alex but I think in Gully Foyle I was getting away from that.

JS: How many different comic strips do you think you did altogether?

SP: Roughly I'd say about 15.

JS: What would be the longest running?

SP: I think it might be "Yarmak".

JS: What would be the shortest?

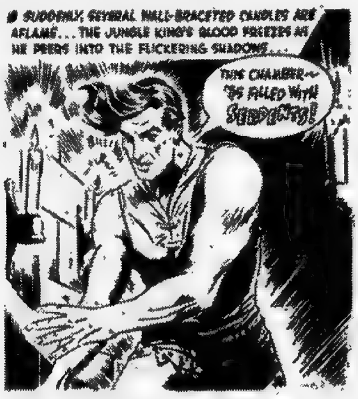
SP: Anthony Fury—it was a one shot of about 40 pages. It sold for 4½d. I never could understand why the publisher didn't charge 6d and pay me a little more for it.

JS: Were all the other comics 6d at the time?

SP: All of them, every one! Anthony Fury was done for the Telegraph incidently. A subsiduary of theirs—The Shakespeare Head Press published it.

JS: Did you ever try to syndicate any newspaper strips in that earlier period?

SP: There were dailies, lot's of interest was shown. The problem was that in the days that I did them they had no syndication in Australia whatsoever. You'll remember that "Silver Starr" appeared in the one paper for two years and for this reason one newspaper couldn't pay enough money. All they wanted to pay in those days was $20, which wasn't very much, so you were really better off doing comic pages—you could get 7 or 8 a comic page. I did anyway. I've been told that I got more than anybody in those times!


SUDDENLY, SEVERAL WALL-BRACKETED CANDLES ARE AFLAME... THE JUNGLE KING'S BLOOD FREEZES AS HE PEERS INTO THE FLICKERING SHADOWS...
THIS CHAMBER— 'TIS FILLED WITH

Yarmak

JS: Have you ever thought of doing anything since Gully Foyle in the way of a newspaper strip?

SP: No, that one captivates all of my imagination because there's so much I could do with it. In fact, if I do it again, I'm going to give it an entirely different slant and I'll do it right from the beginning once more.

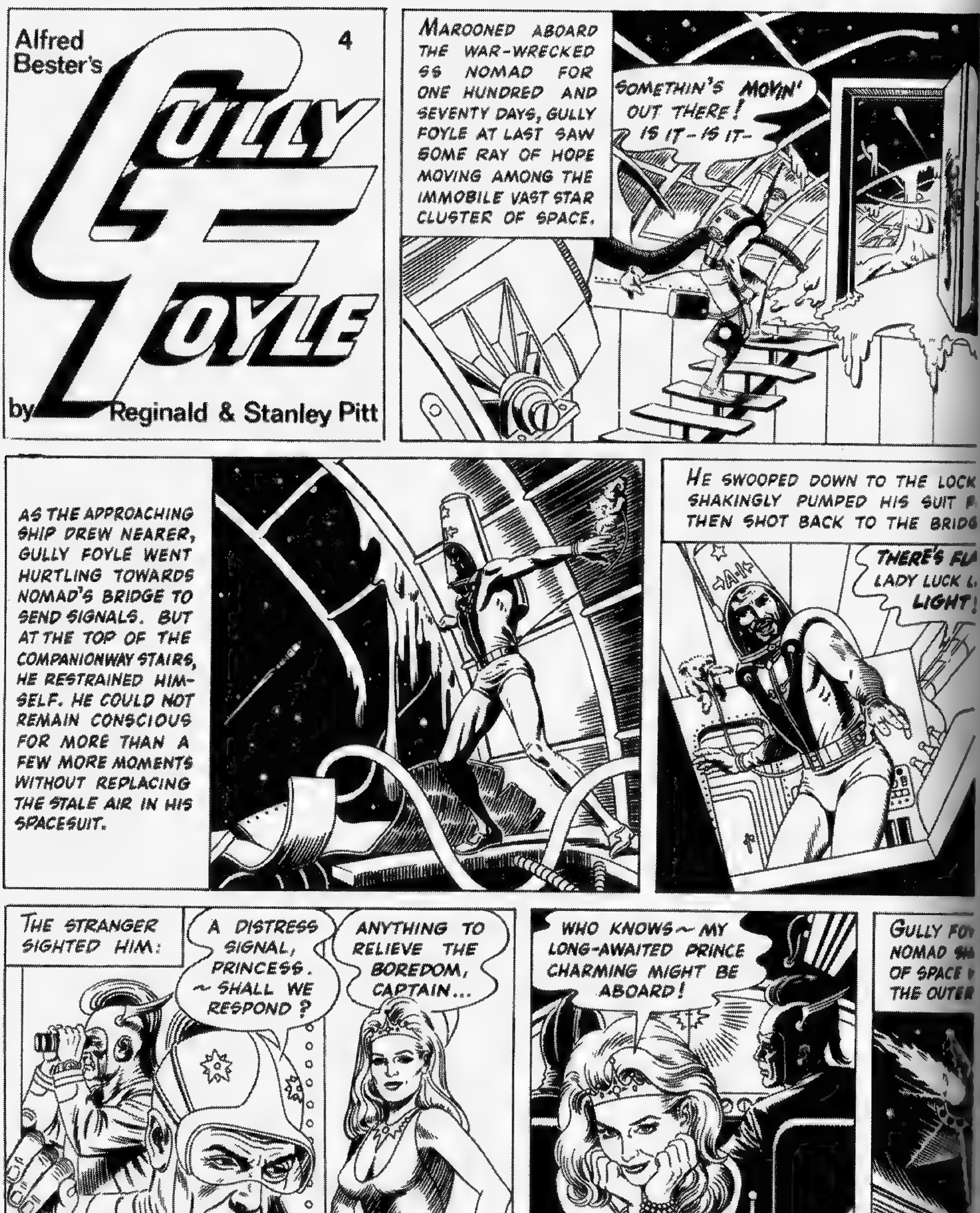
JS: So if you do do this, there will have virtually been three series. The first, the redoing and the third. It'd be great if you do all 200 pages! Do you still have the original art?

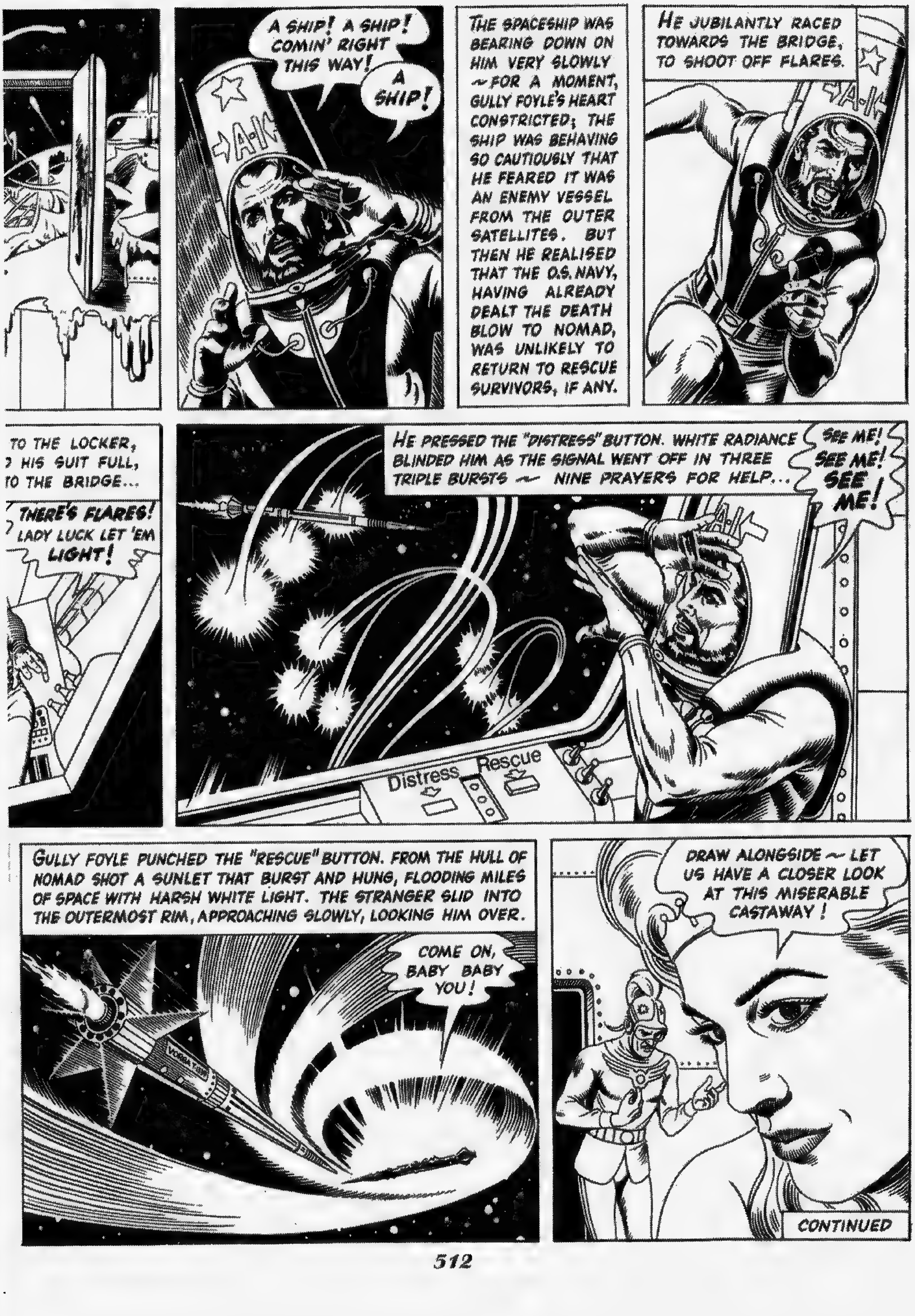
SP: Reg, has the original art. I didn't like to keep it as I lose interest in things once I've done them and I'm always looking forward to the next job.

JS: What is your advice to aspiring artists?

SP: You really want to know that? It's "don't!" Keep and develop it as a private hobby unless you are lucky enough to have a private income!

*Note...
I'd like to thank Hugh O'Kennon for making available some of the extra illustrations used in this article.
MLG.


Alfred Bester's
GULLY FOYLE
4
by Reginald & Stanley Pitt
MAROONED ABOARD THE WAR-WRECKED SS NOMAD FOR ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY DAYS, GULLY FOYLE AT LAST SAW SOME RAY OF HOPE MOVING AMONG THE IMMOBILE VAST STAR CLUSTER OF SPACE.
SOMETHIN'S MOVIN' OUT THERE! IS IT — IS IT—
AS THE APPROACHING SHIP DREW NEARER, GULLY FOYLE WENT HURTLING TOWARDS NOMAD'S BRIDGE TO SEND SIGNALS. BUT AT THE TOP OF THE COMPANIONWAY STAIRS, HE RESTRAINED HIMSELF. HE COULD NOT REMAIN CONSCIOUS FOR MORE THAN A FEW MORE MOMENTS WITHOUT REPLACING THE STALE AIR IN HIS SPACESUIT.
HE SWOOPED DOWN TO THE LOCK
SHAKINGLY PUMPED HIS SUIT
THEN SHOT BACK TO THE BRIDG
THERE'S FL
LADY LUCK L
LIGHT!
THE STRANGER SIGHTED HIM:
A DISTRESS SIGNAL, PRINCESS. ~ SHALL WE RESPOND ?
ANYTHING TO RELIEVE THE BOREDOM, CAPTAIN...
WHO KNOWS ~ MY LONG-AWAITED PRINCE CHARMING MIGHT BE ABOARD!
STANLEY PITT
GULLY FO
NOMAD
OF SPACE
THE OUTER


A SHIP! A SHIP! COMIN' RIGHT THIS WAY!
A SHIP!
THE SPACESHIP WAS BEARING DOWN ON HIM VERY SLOWLY ~ FOR A MOMENT, GULLY FOYLE'S HEART CONSTRICTED; THE SHIP WAS BEHAVING SO CAUTIOUSLY THAT HE FEARED IT WAS AN ENEMY VESSEL FROM THE OUTER SATELLITES. BUT THEN HE REALISED THAT THE O.S. NAVY, HAVING ALREADY DEALT THE DEATH BLOW TO NOMAD, WAS UNLIKELY TO RETURN TO RESCUE SURVIVORS, IF ANY.
HE JUBILANTLY RACED TOWARDS THE BRIDGE, TO SHOOT OFF FLARES.
TO THE LOCKER, HIS SUIT FULL, TO THE BRIDGE...
THERE'S FLARES! LADY LUCK LET 'EM LIGHT!
HE PRESSED THE "DISTRESS" BUTTON. WHITE RADIANCE BLINDED HIM AS THE SIGNAL WENT OFF IN THREE TRIPLE BURSTS ~ NINE PRAYERS FOR HELP...
SEE ME! SEE ME! SEE ME!
Distress
Rescue
GULLY FOYLE PUNCHED THE "RESCUE" BUTTON. FROM THE HULL OF NOMAD SHOT A SUNLET THAT BURST AND HUNG, FLOODING MILES OF SPACE WITH HARSH WHITE LIGHT. THE STRANGER SLID INTO THE OUTERMOST RIM, APPROACHING SLOWLY, LOOKING HIM OVER.
COME ON, BABY BABY YOU!
DRAW ALONGSIDE ~ LET US HAVE A CLOSER LOOK AT THIS MISERABLE CASTAWAY!
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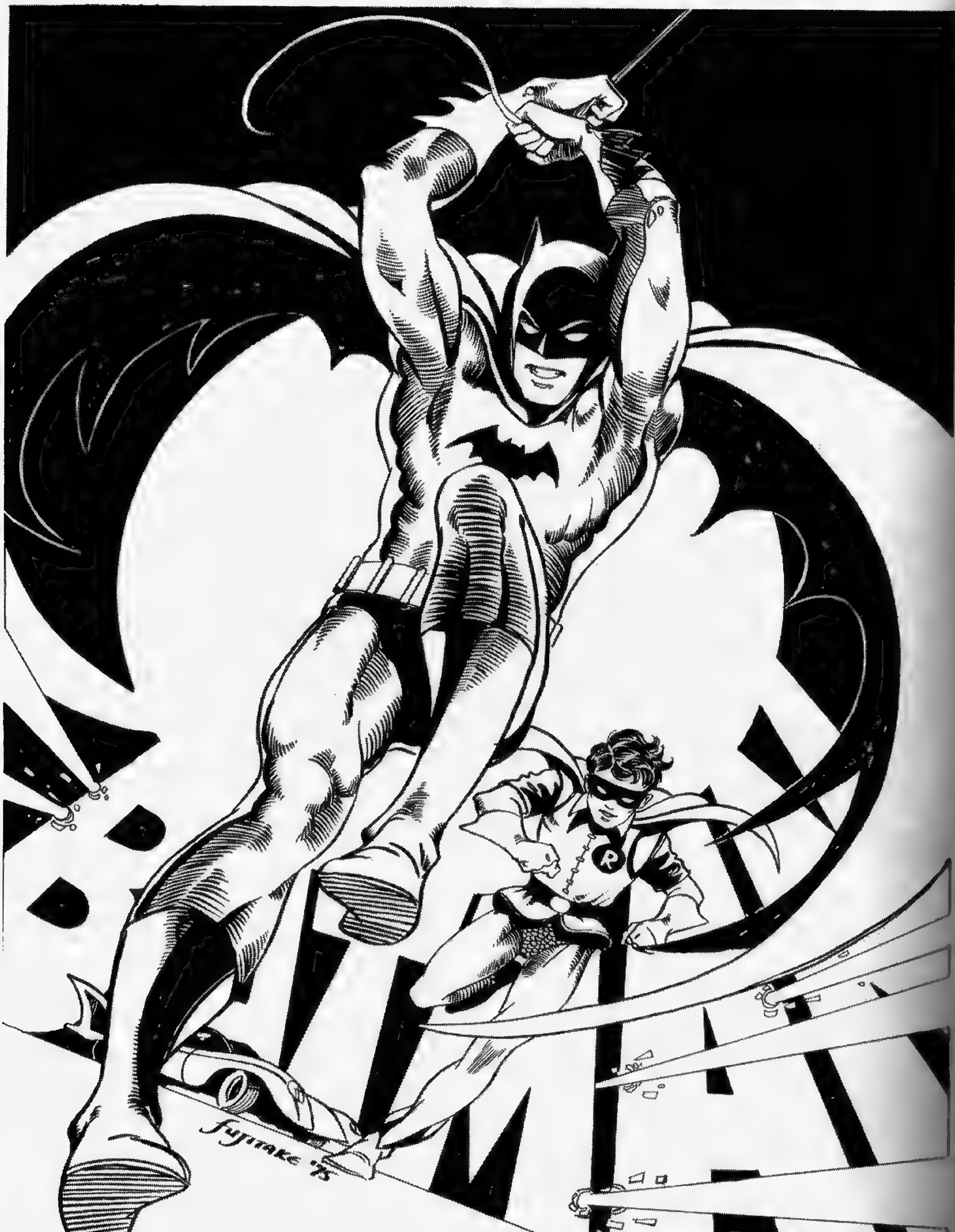
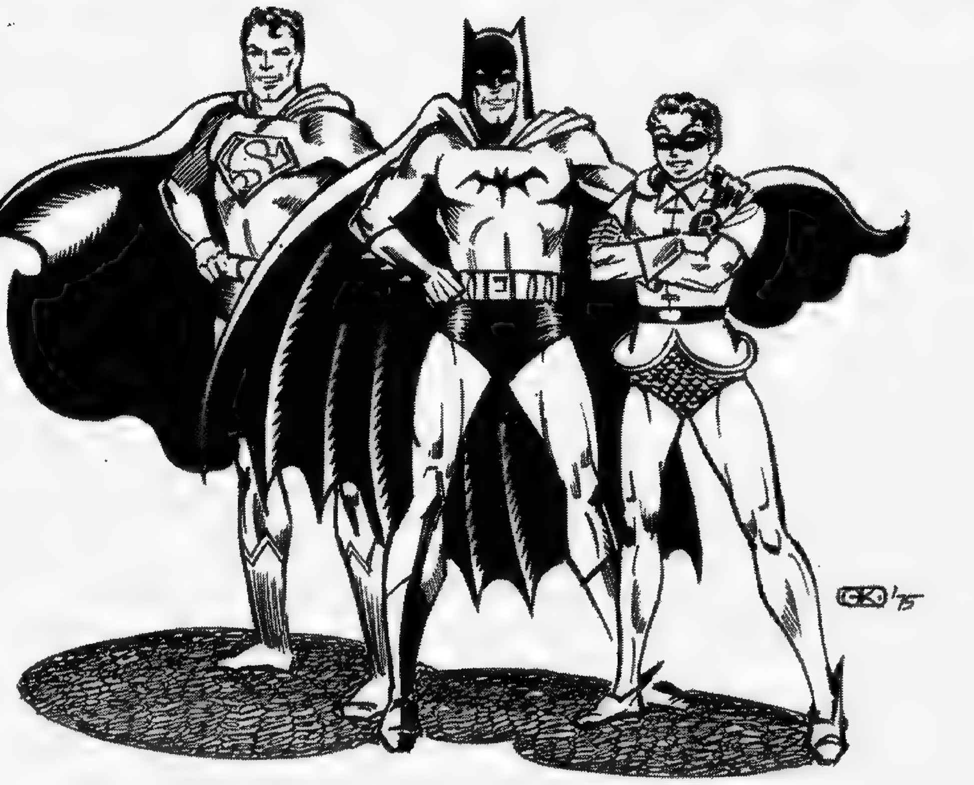

Fujitake '75

INTERVIEW:

DICK SPRANG



BY

JOHN L. GARCIA
&
BOB COSGROVE

Back in the "GOLDEN AGE" of comics, when it became obvious that public demand for BATMAN and ROBIN exceeded the supply of art that any one man could churn out in a single month, National Periodicals began hiring good artists who could emulate Bob Kane's style. One of the best, and the most durable, was DICK SPRANG.

Sprang's gradual rise in the art world was fairly typical. Born in Fremont, Ohio, a little town near Lake Erie, he began as a sign painter at age fifteen, doing billboards, street banners for fairs, and lobby posters for Fremont's two movie houses.

Upon graduating from high school he joined the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, working in the art department of the Toledo News-Bee. There he learned layout, advertising art, editorial cartooning, photolayout, composition, printing problems, and most of all, the importance of meeting deadlines. In an age when people relied mainly on newspapers, rather than electronic media, beating a rival paper's extra on the Will Rogers/Wiley Post crash by thirty minutes could mean a difference of thousands of dollars in street sales. Sprang doubled as photographer's assistant, and on big stories, served as a leg man, taking notes and phoning in story details for rewrite.

Although he was making a good salary, particularly by depression standards, Sprang wanted a bigger challenge. He quit his job, prepared some samples, and made the rounds of the New York publishers, hoping to illustrate pulp stories. "The first publisher I caught on with was Street and Smith," he recalls. "And then the Thrilling Group (also know as Standard Publications and Better Publications). When I knew them in the mid and late thirties, they published a string of twenty-four pulps. I think I free-lanced for every pulp house in New York at one time or another."

Sprang worked mostly on Western stories, doing dry-brush illustrations. He felt a strong affinity for the West, and knew quite a bit about equipment, horse gear, and other technical details. Reading the stories was a revelation. "Hell," Sprang decided, "I can write these damn stories as good as these guys can." So he tried it, and sold twenty-seven of them. During this period Sprang also did occasional illustrations for The Shadow pulps.

Inevitably, Sprang met other artists, and formed "a sort of two-bit agency," operating out of a little loft on 42nd Street, just off Fifth Avenue. In the mid-thirties, many of Sprang's pulp publishers clients entered the comics field, and with them went Sprang, and his two partners, ED KRESSY and NORMAN FALLON. As we pick up the interview, Sprang is talking about his two partners: "Ed was a great layout and composition man; he'd take a page and layout six panels in no time flat. Very rough —just a sketch. Then he'd turn the page over to me, and I'd detail the figures, because I was a figure man and action man. Norm would ink and letter. With this method, we could easily whip out two, three, four pages a day. Of course, we weren't getting anything for them. God knows what we got per page. I forget. And of course, the stories were God-awful. The publishers

would pick up a bunch of old drunk, pulp-writers, aspiring screen-writers, or radio script writers who were down on their uppers, and they'd try to master comic book continuity."

C.C. Who did you work for?

D.S. The only comic I definitely recall working on with Ed and Norm was Prize Comics, the Power Nelson and Futureman stories. The cover of Prize #1 looks like our stuff, and if Prize Publications had any other books early on, we probably contributed to them. We also did some Lone Ranger radio scripts and continuity art.

I remember one guy, John Reese, who edited a string of comics, although I can't remember any of the titles. It could have been the Prize Group. Reese was a good guy, low key, an honest young fellow and we did regular work for him. But I could see this wasn't getting us anywhere, so we went mostly into advertising work.

C.C. Why did you come back to comics?

D.S. I got fed up with the long sessions I had to spend with clients, wasting the whole afternoon talking about extraneous matters. And, I wanted to leave New York. I had my eye on Arizona, but in those years, advertising artists had to be in N.Y., L.A., Chicago, or maybe San Francisco. It occured to me that if I could hook on with a big comic publisher, this might allow me to eventually work by mail.

C.C. How did you come to work for National?

D.S. I looked over the successful books, and I liked DC's production very much, particularly Batman and Robin, which Bob Kane was doing.

One point I'd like to make about those days. There were a lot of kids coming up then, and we were all very observant. We read all the syndicated strips, and were all devotees of Alex Raymond, Hal Foster, and Milton Caniff. We would save their stuff and swipe it, imitate them. They were so good, you just couldn't help it. And it was good discipline, because it taught you a lot about how to draw these union suit heroes. As a result, all the books looked as though they were drawn by four or five men. It was like the movies, both then and now. Bullit has a good chase scene, and soon there are five new movies, all with chase scenes.

C.C. More like twenty new movies.

D.S. Yes. Anyway, after copying Alex Raymonds, for training purposes, he began to creep into my work, and this helped prepare me for Batman—not that it ever, at any time, approached Alex Raymond's skill.

So I prepared a sample, working "twice up," just as if it would be reproduced. Rather than do a Batman imitation, which I feared would brand me as a competition, or as a seeker of one particular strip, I did a one-page Terry and the Pirates type story. I managed to drag about everything possible into the one page, because I thought it was good psychology to show I could draw almost anything. I did it in black and white, then overlaid it with color washes, so it appeared as it would in a Sunday supplement or comic book. It was an impressive piece, which got me into see Whitney Ellsworth, executive editor of DC at that time.

C.C. Can you describe your interview with Ellsworth?

D.S. He made a few complimentary remarks about my samples, then asked if I'd like to try Batman for him. I said, "Well great, sure." So he gave me three manuscript pages and said, "See what you can do. I'd like to see these about Thursday, if possible, and I'd like to see them inked; you can forget the lettering—just outline the word balloons." This story had already been published, evidentally drawn by Kane. I didn't have a great file on Batman, and I didn't look up what Kane had done on this story, because that would've defeated Ellsworth's purpose. I interpreted the pages the way I saw them, and brought them in on time. Ellsworth called the treasurer, and paid me for those three pages, pages which he was never going to use. Well—this really impressed me. Then he said, "Okay, I'm going to try you on a story." So he gave me, I believe, a twelve or thirteen page Batman manuscript, written by Cameron.

C.C. Don Cameron?

D.S. He was the son of W.C. Cameron a vice president of the Ford Motor Company who used to speak every Sunday night on the Ford Motor Hour, talking about free enterprise and all that stuff. Well, his son was in New York, writing, and was a fine script writer, to my mind. I went home with his script, which Whit wanted in about fifteen days. This meant I'd have to do about a page a day, inked and lettered—camera ready art. I was scared out of my wits. But I did it, and brought it back. Whit looked at the splash page, then leafed through the whole group, not rapidly, but not slowly, taking in each page, but not scrutinizing every damn line. When he got through, he straightened them up, laid them on the desk, picked up the phone, called the treasurer, and told him to make me out a check. So I said, "Well, that's great Mr. Ellsworth; I thank you very much. But—look, I've been around New York for a few years, and I've free-lanced with about every outfit I can think of, on my level, and I've never submitted anything so lengthly as this without being asked to make a change."

"I don't doubt it a bit," he said. "But if you can keep this up—the way you've interpreted this manuscript—that's all you'll ever have to worry about with us. We have a bunch of young artists, working on salary, and they'll make any minor changes we want. We're not buying an individual panel of artwork, but your interpretation of a script. If we like your interpretation, which we do, on this story, we're not going to bother you with all kinds of little changes. We want you on the line, producing the major stuff."

I was very flattered, but as a matter of fact, I still believe that individual interpretation is the secret of doing a good comic from someone else's script. You simply have to have a feeling, and of course, if it's an established book, you have to study it, and attempt to draw your characters the way other artists draw them. Since I had proved that I could interpret a script, and that I could meet deadlines, I met DC's two most important criteria.

C.C. I gather that Whitney Ellsworth was a good man to work for?

D.S. He had a flair for working with artists and treating them with respect, which was a bit unusual around town. In some houses, the artist was the floor mat. Whit was a great guy, a humorous, non-assuming sort of character, and by the way, an ex-newspaperman. Whit had seen it all, and heard it all, but he was never cynical. He was appreciative. He could be though—hardboiled as all hell, and he could take a lot. He had to, as executive editor. Whitney Ellsworth was the best editorial director for that period in the industry. He and Jack Lieborwitz were able to hold DC together, and later, with Mort Wiesinger's help, and Jack Schiff's they set the industry standard of high quality. Ellsworth felt strongly about artistic integrity and moral integrity. Because his books had a vast distribution, he felt he had this kind of responsibility to his reader, and to the publisher. I liked this in an editor. I think it's necessary.

C.C. Can you describe your working method?

D.S. I have a strong visual sense; after reading the manuscript once, I'm with it. Afterwards it's a mere guide. Each morning I'd reread the page I was about to do. By then, my subconcious had pretty well set each page's dramatic impact, so I could start right in drawing. I had editorial control over the manuscripts—I could make changes if I saw fit. For example, if a writer had a Custer's Last Stand with 5,000 charging Indians, I could change it to make it drawable, or rewrite it entirely. To be a comic book artist you have to be able to draw anything, from any angle, dramatically. Just as a camera, you probe, as a cinematographer does. You are a probe, searching, in those few hours that you're at that board. And that exploring is the artist's great adventure and reward. Balloons, of course, are always a problem, and interfere. They tend to be a road block, as do captions, but they're necessary for narrative clarity. You've go to place them in the most amenable position, where they'll be easily readable, but won't interfere with the flowing, dramatic artwork. The style of the story, as a whole, as drawing, is the essence of the adventure comic. There's a rhythm, a pace, a tempo, and hopefully, a beautiful imagery that tells the story. If these are good, the result is style, which is to say, elegance within the medium.

C.C. I notice, like Eisner and certain other comic artists, you compare drawing a comic book to shooting a movie.

D.S. The artist is alone, just as the director is alone in the concept of what he is trying to do. The director has help, however - propmen, actors, cameramen, make-up people, costume artists. But you, as comic book artist, must be all these departments. You're the costume artist, the location scout, the casting artist. If you've got five gangsters in one story, are they all going to be the same height? No! One will be skinny, one fat, another medium. This variety is important. The reader may not be aware of it consciously, but subconsciously, it makes sense to him.

Actually, what you're working with in comics is the frozen frame, where you stop action at a dramatic point in the action. That is about as far as you can go on the page. There have been attempts to bring accelerated motion to the page. Hogarth tried to, and his method worked pretty well, but visual tricks can never depict action with the punch inherent in television, or the movies.

C.C. Could studying films help a potential comic book artist?

D.S. Yes. One thing I always liked to use was ceilings. I'm a nut about ceilings. I think they have great compositional value, as you can see in the way Greg Toland composed shots for Orson Wells in Citizen Kane, or in the way Hitchcock used ceilings in Psycho. And then, of course, there's always the wonderful stairwell. You can do anything on the stairs, and it'll always be dramatic. Think of the angles you can shoot from--limitless.

I think any comic book artist could benifit from viewing Griffith's Birth of A Nation - it's hard to beat as a model for depicting almost anything. His compositional use of high ceilings and his door panels, his inventiveness with costumes; that famous cannon close-up where you're looking along the barrel of a cannon and out of the smoke a soldier charges and rams a flag staff down its muzzle—Griffith used the close-up as an exclamation point and cut to it for this purpose only. Comic book artists tend to overlook the true purpose of a close-up, and use it as a cop-out. Sometimes we use it as a rest-stop, a pause, and that's needed.

Another good man to study is Renoir, the painter's son and movie director. In his picture, Rules of the Game, there's a lesson for anyone who wants to learn how to draw a room complicated by its many people. And Eisenstein's Potemkin—a masterpiece of flowing compositional technique—these are all things I would advise any aspiring comic book artist to give an overview.

C.C. What else can you tell them?

D.S. Going back to frozen frame-stop action problems, I noticed in much of the work done while I was active, that so many artists passed up chances to give inanimate objects action, or to suggest action by simple, functional means. For instance, if you have a big truck charging down the highway, and its got a tarp, have the tarp come undone, billowing in the wind above the truck. It doubles the sense of action. This was a trick I liked to use; perhaps it was inspired by the capes on various characters. That way, you pretty much eliminate the need for speed lines.

C.C. After joining DC, what happened to your studio, and work for other companies?

D.S. After beginning Batman, I did no other comic art; I'd promised Whit Ellsworth I'd give DC my exclusive production. However, some of my work for Prize and other books, which had been held for later publication, might well have appeared afterwards.

Upon joining DC, I ended my working association with Kressy and Fallon under our original three-way arrangement. Fallon and I shared a studio during the war years, each working on his own stuff.

Kressy assisted me on some of my first Batman layouts. He hoped to go partners with me, but he could never measure up to the deadline requirements, so I quickly phased him out.

As for short stories, I see that my work appeared in Martin Goodman's pulps well into the 1940's. DC had no objection to my continuing to sell fiction and

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articles to anybody I could.

C.C. What was your monthly output?

D.S. It varied according to script supply. I was a fast worker, and often they didn't supply me with enough scripts to keep me busy full time. The average monthly output was at least two twelve or thirteen page stories.

C.C. And obviously, you were eventually able to leave New York?

D.S. I finally cut a deal with DC where I could move to Arizona and do everything by mail. It also happened at that time that my inker Mac MacDonald, who was a great inker, also moved to Arizona, and later Charlie Paris, who lived in Tuscon.

C.C. Did you pick your inkers?

D.S. Strictly an editor's perogative. In fact, I never saw Charlie while he was in Arizona. I would pencil the pages and send them out to New York. They would OK them, then mail them down to Charlie, who'd ink them and send them back. A circuitous arrangement, but a necessary one.

C.C. How were you paid?

D.S. Negotiated page rate, plus bonuses. There was no contract/salary set-up. After I caught on and was familiar with the characters, I could pencil and ink a page a day. Just pencilling, I've done as many as five pages a day. But boy, that's pushing. And that was pushing from personal desire—when I wanted to get away to prospect and explore the mountains and canyons and deserts of the southwest or run the Colorado river. I'm an old river rat and river runner, and that was my paramount interest, not comics, although I always did the very best job I could.

C.C. Aside from your beautifully stylized villains, one of the hallmarks of your work seemed to be giant machines and tricky angle shots.

D.S. By happenstance, DC gave me a few scripts which required a great deal of research. I loved doing research, and always tried to make my drawings as authentic as possible. Some of the stories were set in ancient Rome and ancient Egypt, and after researching them, I came up with page layouts that accomodated the scope and grandeur of the locales. It's dam hard to do anything dramatic around huge temples unless you're able to depict them properly. I got a lot of detail into them—tricky perspectives, aerial shots, worm's eye view—and it wasn't long before they began to feed me that type of script. Jack Schiff, who was my first editor under Whitney, liked that treatment very much. Lou Cameron, and my favorite writer, Bill Finger, would come up with scripts that were obviously tailored to what I like to do. I'm saddened to learn of Finger's death. Although I never knew Finger well, whenever I received one of his scripts, it was a delight to have in my hands. I knew I'd have a good story, told so the artist could translate it graphically. Finger had the artist's eye, great literary inventiveness, and the ability to write.

As for the angle scenes, one thing I always enjoyed was doing a big city deal, where Batman and Robin were stalking the rooftops. This gave me a chance to try some tremendous perspective shots—three-point perspective and problems like that. A thorough knowledge of creative perspective opens many otherwise hidden trails to successful script interpretation.

C.C. Who amongst your conterporaries in the field influenced you?

D.S. I admired Kirby's work very much. I've always been envious of it. It's a very forceful, direct style—his swiftness, his slashing action, influenced me, in that I always strived for it, within the limitations of the Batman and Robin figures as DC wanted them at the time. Right through the thirties, forties, and early sixties, they didn't want any heavy shadows on any of these characters unless the actual lighting called for it - night, dungeon scenes, things like that.

C.C. That seems like an odd policy for a creature of the night—

D.S. Liebowitz told us to cut out the blacks because we were doubling the black ink bills.

C.C. Talk about economizing!

D.S. Today, I notice, they are going in the other direction. I wasn't able to really express myself in my own style as I would have liked to.

C.C. Do you think you would have been a better cartoonist if you hadn't been obliged to follow the work of Bob Kane?

D.S. I think I would have developed my own style. I don't know what it'd have been. I think I'd have insisted on more control over the color, if I'd been my own man. This was always a pain in the neck—the color you'd get sometimes. As Mac MacDonald said one time about original pages:
"You know, nothing looks as beautiful as this stuff, on a piece of kid paper, beautifully inked, beautifully drawn, and then you see the goddam thing printed on one of these lousy comic pages, with crummy color, and lousy registration, it just looks like pure junk. It makes you sick."

That's more or less true, and was especially so during the war days, when some of the publishers were stuck with incredibly poor paper made from-God knows what they made it from.

C.C. Getting back to influences, who else did you like?

D.S. This guy who did the Westerns, who's now the publisher of DC —

C.C. Carmine Infantino?

D.S. Yes. His work in DC's Western books I admired tremendously. And Wayne Boring was the main Superman artist around that time, wasn't he? Well, I think he did very fine work. Of course, outside the comic book field, I continued to admire Alex Raymond, Milt Caniff, and Austin Briggs, who could really draw dramatically and move continuity forcefully.

C.C. What did you think of Bob Kane?

D.S. Well, I only met him once. I've no thoughts about him as a person. His early work—not his very earliest, not Batman #1, but shortly thereafter—was absolutely superb. I think his concept of Batman, with the use of the cape, and the huge, bat-like shadow, really did depict the bat-like menace, the man whose mere silhouette against a skyscraper strikes fear into the hearts of criminals, and all that malarkey. Kane did an excellent job in a certain time period. I thought he was unbeatable, and I copied him straight-out. But then it seemed as if his work took a turn for the worse. I don't know why. I never discussed it with Kane, or anyone else.

C.C. Did you ever get sick of working on Batman and Robin?

D.S. Yes. During all the years I worked on them, there were periods of utter fatigue, when I got tired of the same characters and stories, and wondered why the hell I was there, but on the whole I enjoyed dramatic presentation and I had an affection for the characters. I always liked drawing the Penguin very much, and I liked the Joker. But I'm an utter realist; I knew what I was doing was a way of making a living in a particular place and time.

C.C. Would you have liked to have done other characters?

D.S. I would have enjoyed a good Western, perhaps a Western railroad strip. In fact, I have in my files four or five pretty-well-worked-out, original strips. I've never peddled them, and never will, because I want nothing more to do with that endless, all-day art, and deadlines.

C.C. But you did do some non-Batman work——

D.S. Yes, quite a few Real Fact stories, and, I think, a couple of Westerns. I did many covers. When I was handling all the lead story art for World's Finest Comics I was doing quite a few covers. Of course, it's a little difficult to do covers by mail, but when I was in N.Y., I was doing covers a lot of the time, and not always for my own stories.

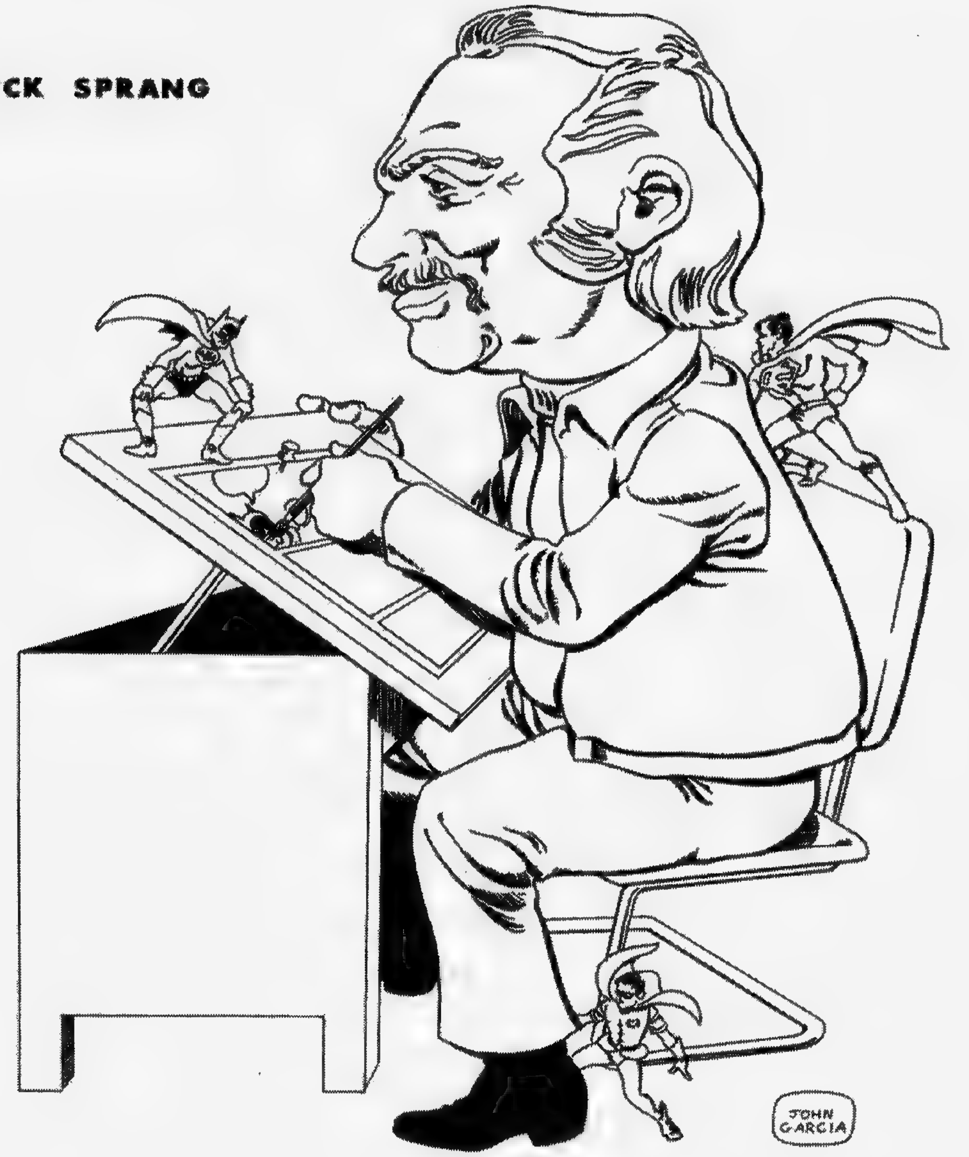
C.C. How did you start working on the World's Finest assignment?

D.S. I believe it was Mort Weisinger's idea. Mort was an old friend of mine, and the Superman editor. He'd also done some Batman work in the early days at DC I guess. One day I walked into the editorial office, and Mort, being my friend, said "Do me a World's Finest story with Batman and Robin in it." I did, and it just developed into a regular thing.

C.C. Tell us about Weisinger.

D.S. After I went to work at DC, he was probably the best friend I had in New York. We admired each other. I admired his ability to plot, especially since I wrote myself, on the side. Where I found the actual writing easy, Mort was just the opposite. He could plot, but he was hesitant to write commercial fiction. Of course, he was a wonderful article writer, and

DICK SPRANG



now, he has written fiction, and a best selling novel. Mort was a dynamic personality, a magnetic man, but he picked his friends carefully. If he disliked you, there was no mistaking it. If he did like you, he was like the most gracious of Spanish people. His home was absolutely yours; anything he had was yours; he'd do anything for you. And he praised you. If he introduced you to a stranger, he'd go into a long recitation about what you did, and the quality of your work. Somehow you weren't embarassed, because Mort meant it. I liked him very, very much. I admired his capacity as a story editor, and his great creativity. He was a terrific springboard man, who would farm out ideas to the various writers. He helped many writers and artists gain lasting success -- Bill Mauldin among them.

C.C. Jack Schiff was your other editor---

D.S. He was a quiet man with a slow sense of humor. You could kid him and sometimes he wouldn't quite catch it. And I loved to kid him. We got along splendidly. Jack was a superb copy editor, a grammarian from the word go. He could take an involved sentence of fifteen words, and reduce it to six words that were bracing and direct, that advanced the action and built character. Jack never asked me to do anything without exhibiting respect for the artists problems. I felt solid pleasure in doing my damndest to fulfill his requests over all the years. I don't know where he is today. If anyone does know, I wish they'd let me know.

C.C. Did you ever get any of your art back?

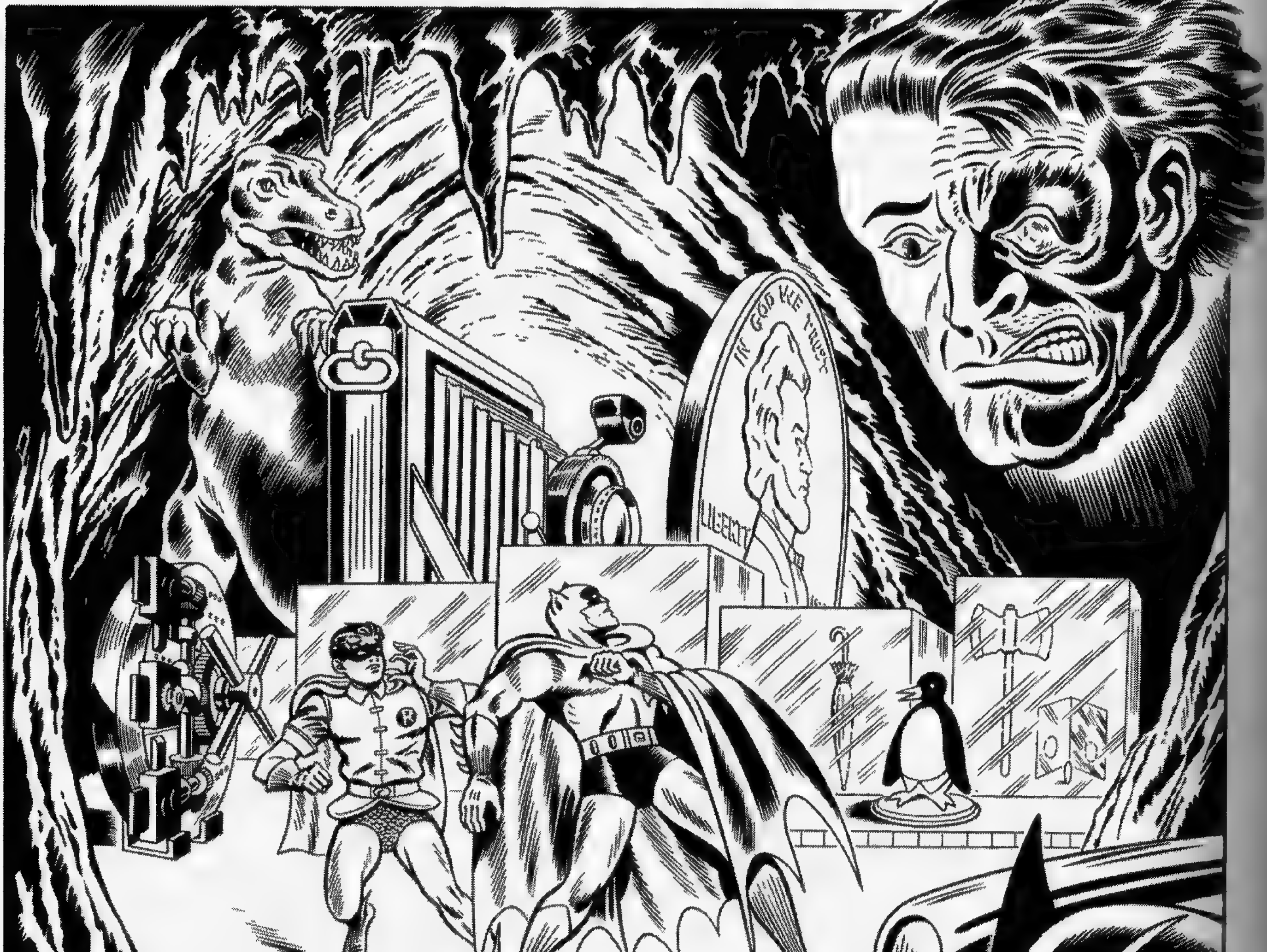
D.S. I never requested any, except for one twelve page story which I still have, a Three Musketeers story that appeared in Batman #32 (Dec. '45 - Jan. '46). I did the whole book, including the cover, which featured the Three Musketeers story.

C.C. The whole book?

D.S. Yes - it's hard to judge an artist's monthly output of those years simply by looking at the books. DC would often stockpile work and then release books with four of my stories, or four Robinson stories, or whatever.

C.C. In all the years you toiled away anonymously on Batman and Robin, were you ever resentful that your work was signed "Bob Kane," and that you never received any credit for your stories?

D.S. Nope. The only place where I wanted to see my name was on the check. But there is an interesting story related to that. I was a guest at a house party of Mort Weisinger's, and one of the men there was Leo



Margolies, on of the great pulp editors, to whom I'd sold fiction and art before joining DC. He worked for Ned Pines' group, and was a very kind man, and a very frank one.

We were at the dinner table with other men and their wives. All the men were connected with publishing--comic book guys, other editors, a Collier's writer, some of the pulp stand-bys--everyone a well known name. When Leo found out what I was doing--comics--he gave me a hell of a bawling out, right in front of Mort and the other guests. Leo said, "Dick, you're ghosting this strip and your name isn't on it! You know what's going to happen to you? In twenty years you'll be a nobody! Nobody will know who the hell you are or what you did!"

Mort got all excited, very nervous. He said, "Dick's completely satisfied, Leo, completely satisfied. We know what he's doing, everybody in the business knows what he's doing, you know," and so on.

Leo said, "Mort, shut-up! I bought your science fiction when you were a sixteen-year-old kid. But you have a name because you're publishing articles under your own name. What's Sprang doing? His name's nowhere." Mort got more and more excited, afraid I'd quit right there and then and go into some field of art where my name would appear. It never happened. But bless his heart, Leo was more or less correct. But no one could have cared less then I.

C.C. In all, then, you were happy with National?

D.S. Most happy. Whit kept his promise. I never had to make a change in my work, the entire time I was in Arizona. There were a few changes made in New York, and occasionally I would start going down some ablational line. Then Jack Schiff would write me a short memo saying, "Watch Robin's head; it's getting a little too big." - something of that nature. Then I'd get all uptight and go searching through the books to see, and sure enough, he was right. That was the only trouble I had, which was no trouble at all. My relationship with DC was pure heaven, absolutely no problems. I had the freedom that was my original goal. I feel very fortunate, and I'm very loyal to the DC of that era, and to all those men. It was kind of a worry at first, since I was three thousand miles away, and there were better artists walking in their door, every week, with damn good samples. They could have hired one of those guys and canned me. But they never did, which shows that DC returned the loyalty they received from me.

I'll tell you--I was always a loner. I never associated with the other comic book artists. It wasn't by choice; it was just that I didn't run into many of them out here in Arizona. I suppose that around that editorial office there were all kinds of abrasive confrontations and incidents, bruised egos, and people fired. Some artists might have legitimately thought that DC was the worst outfit in the world. And perhaps it was, to them. But not to me.

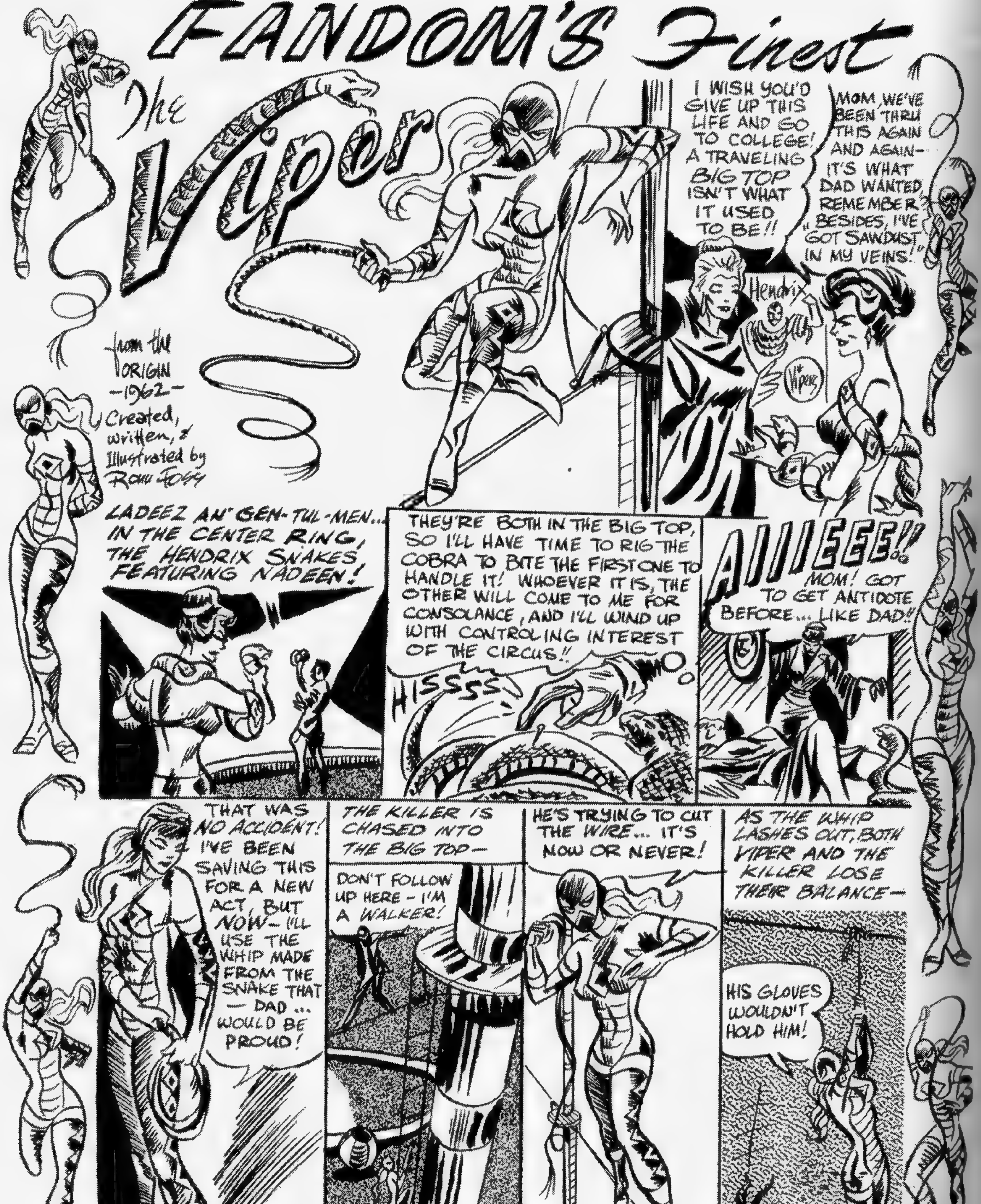
C.C. To close the interview, could you tell us about your non-comic work?

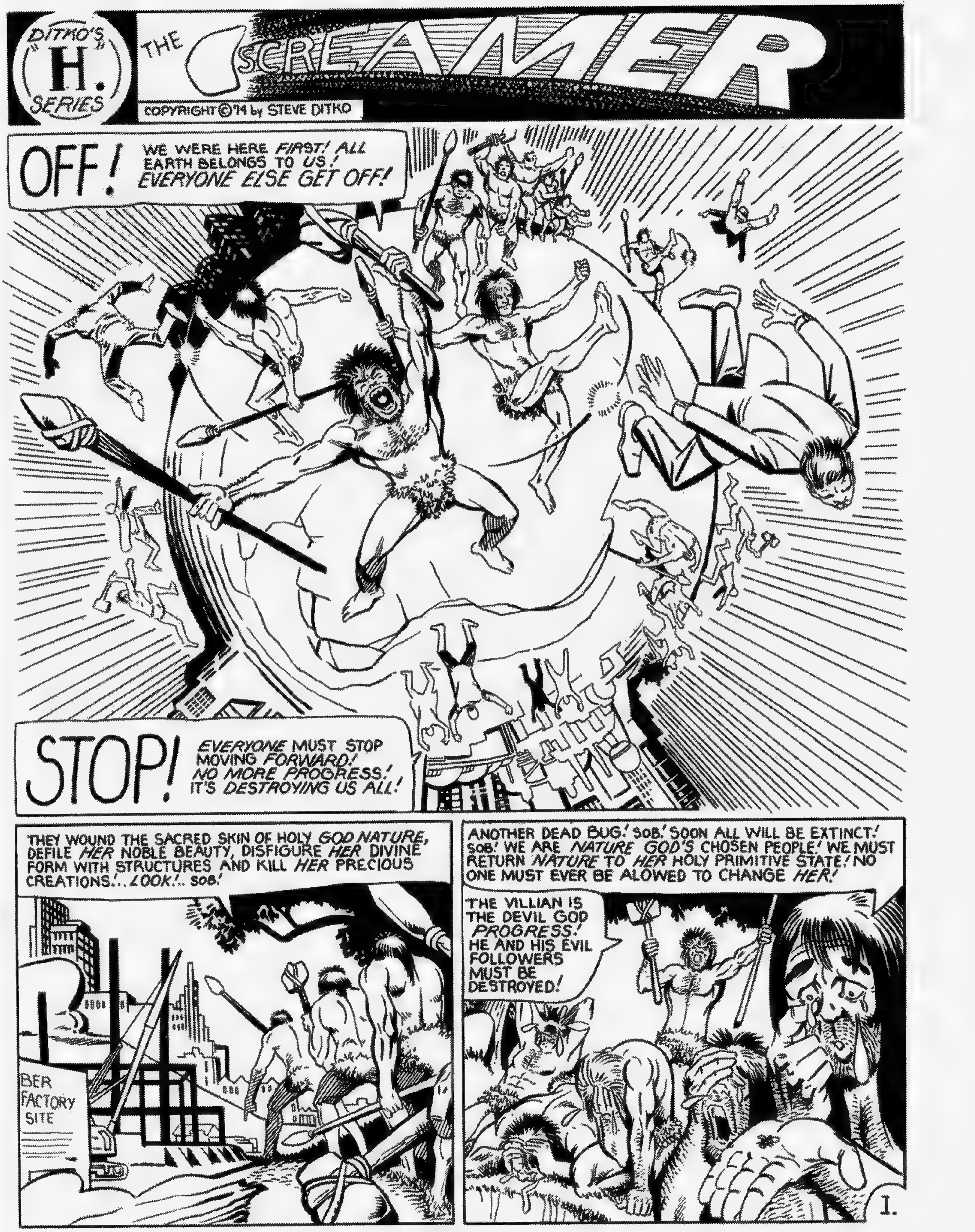
D.S. I enjoy lettering and love the old, old, fancy typefaces. I have quite a collection of them, actual typefronts. Now and then I do a brochure job for an outfit I like. I also hope to do some documentary work on the Civil War and the Pioneer West. I want to get a little deeper into the cowpuncher, the railroader, the miner, the sod-buster. It'll be highly realistic and humanistic.

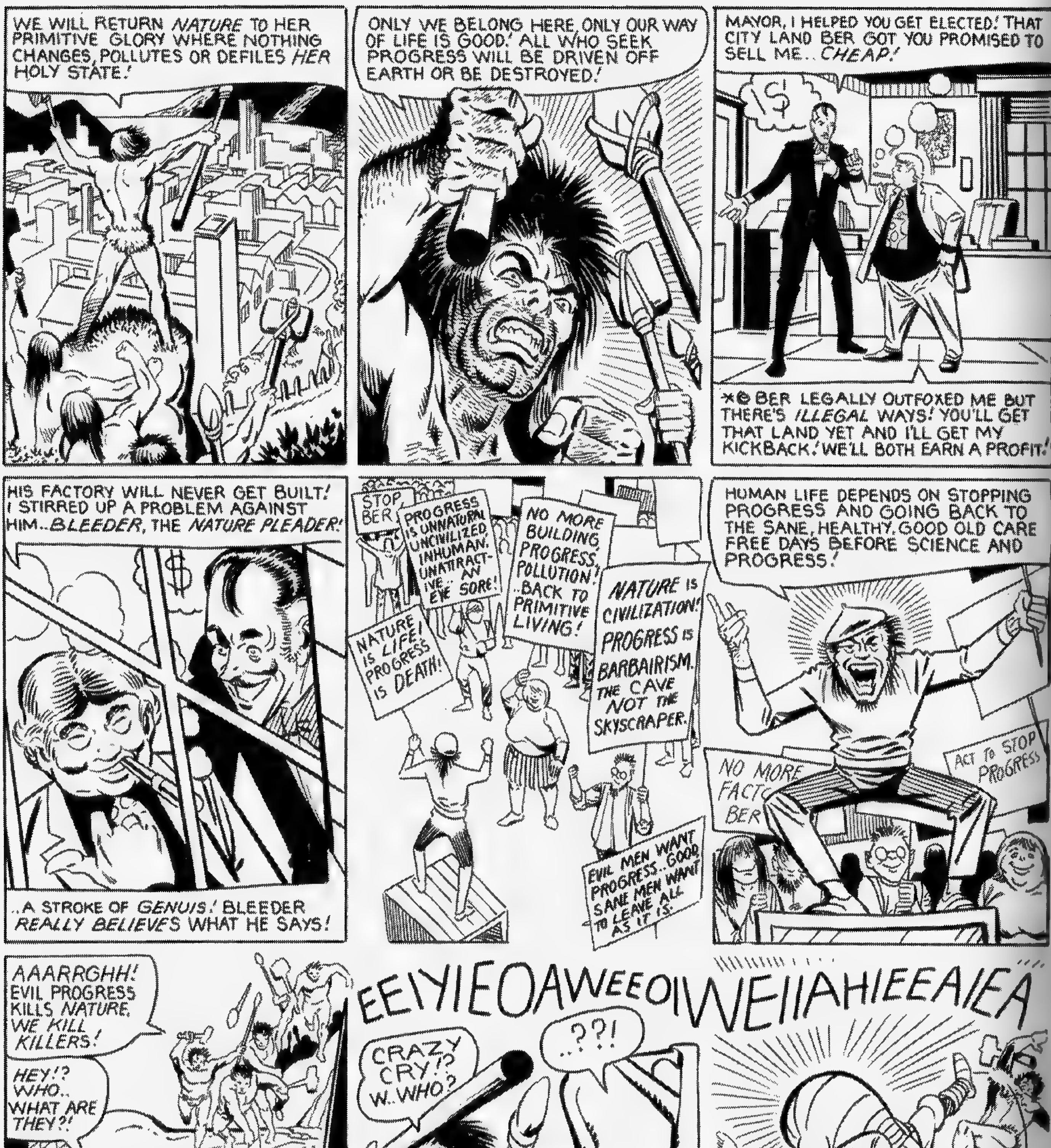
C.C. Thank you very much, Dick; it's been a pleasure.

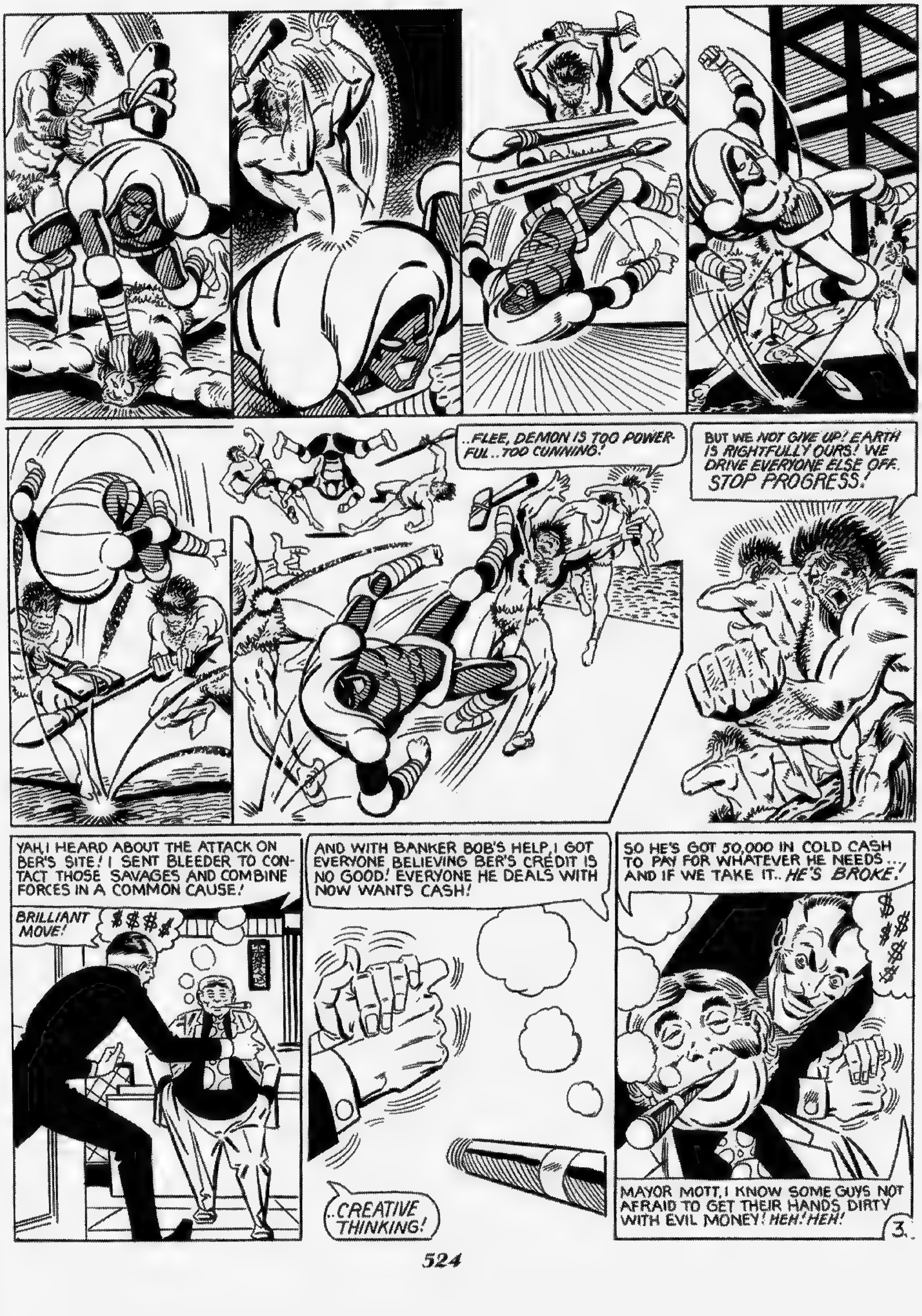
Art for this aritcle by: Dennis Fujitake, Gary Kato, and Dave Hunt.

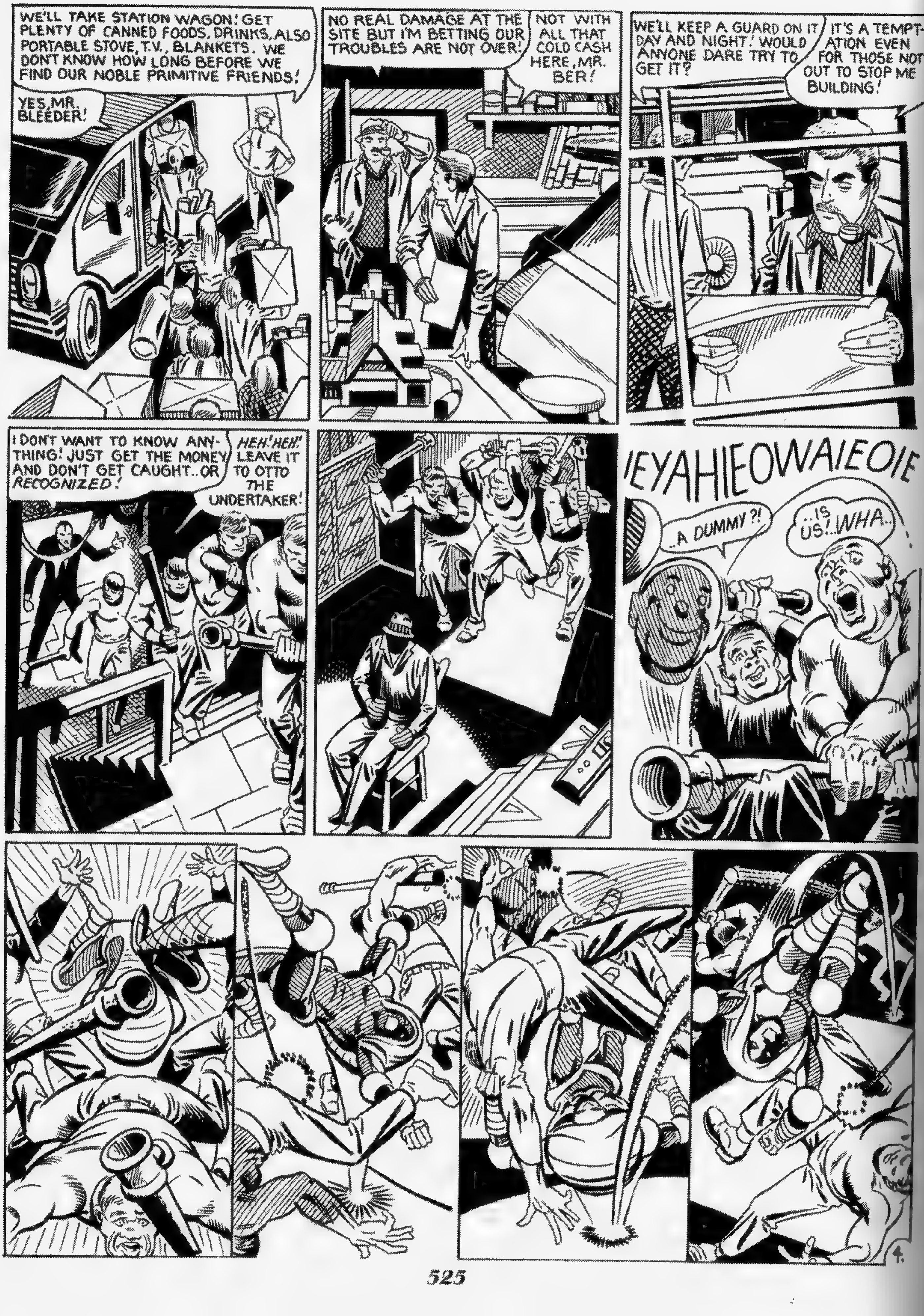
All characters shown in this article are © National Per. Pub. 1976.

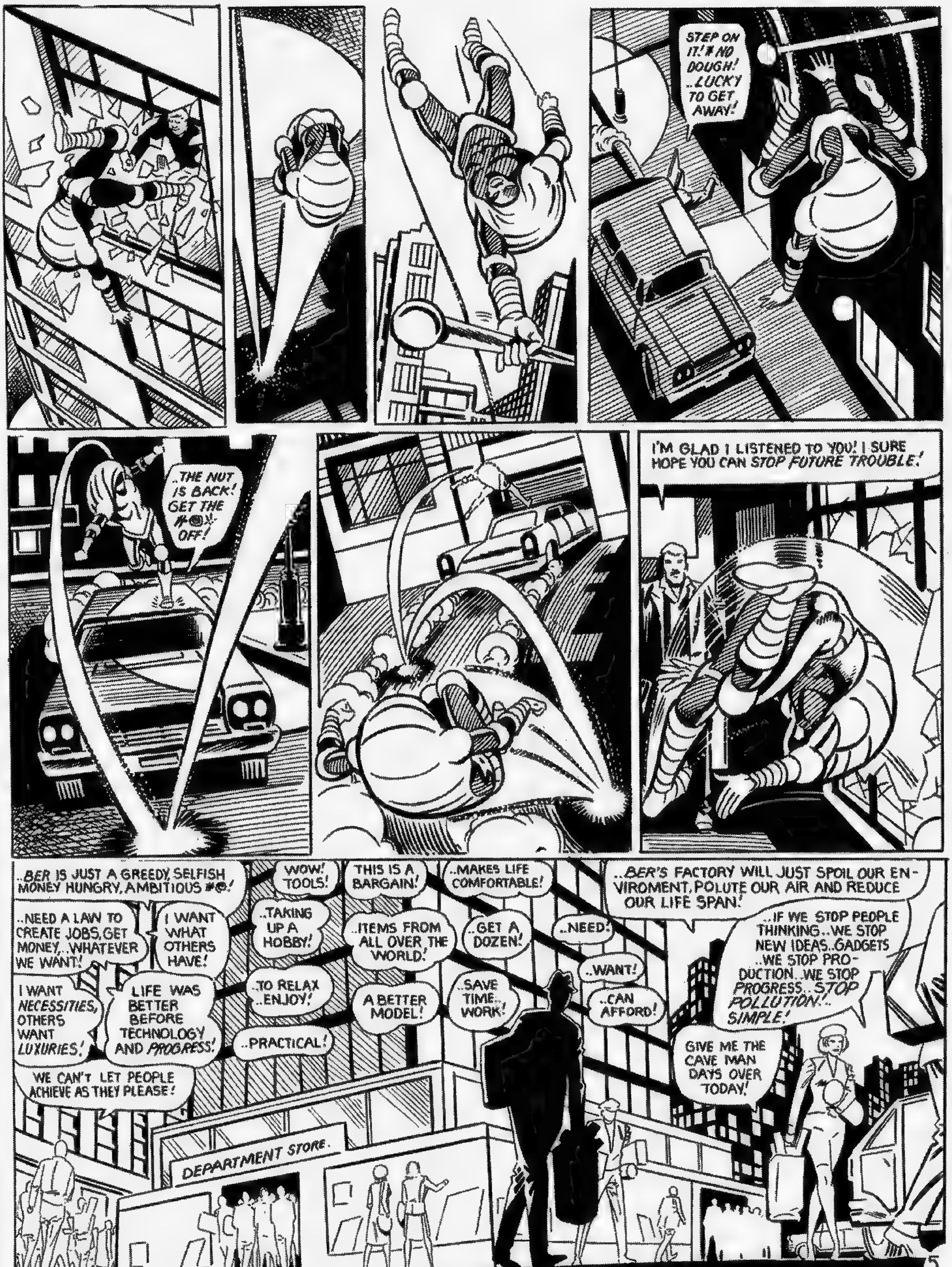

FANDOM'S Finest
The Viper
from the ORIGIN -1962-
Created, written, & Illustrated by Ronn Foss
I WISH YOU'D GIVE UP THIS LIFE AND GO TO COLLEGE! A TRAVELING BIG TOP ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE!!
MOM, WE'VE BEEN THRU THIS AGAIN AND AGAIN-- IT'S WHAT DAD WANTED, REMEMBER? BESIDES, I'VE GOT SAWDUST IN MY VEINS!
Hendrix
The Vipers
LADEEZ AN' GEN-TUL-MEN... IN THE CENTER RING, THE HENDRIX SNAKES! FEATURING NADEEN!
THEY'RE BOTH IN THE BIG TOP, SO I'LL HAVE TIME TO RIG THE COBRA TO BITE THE FIRST ONE TO HANDLE IT! WHOEVER IT IS, THE OTHER WILL COME TO ME FOR CONSOLANCE, AND I'LL WIND UP WITH CONTROLING INTEREST OF THE CIRCUS!!
HISSSS
AIIIEEE!!
MOM! GOT TO GET ANTIDOTE BEFORE... LIKE DAD!!
THAT WAS NO ACCIDENT! I'VE BEEN SAVING THIS FOR A NEW ACT, BUT NOW-- I'LL USE THE WHIP MADE FROM THE SNAKE THAT -- DAD ... WOULD BE PROUD!
THE KILLER IS CHASED INTO THE BIG TOP--
DON'T FOLLOW UP HERE - I'M A WALKER!
HE'S TRYING TO CUT THE WIRE... IT'S NOW OR NEVER!
AS THE WHIP LASHES OUT, BOTH VIPER AND THE KILLER LOSE THEIR BALANCE--
HIS GLOVES WOULDN'T HOLD HIM!
Foss 12/69

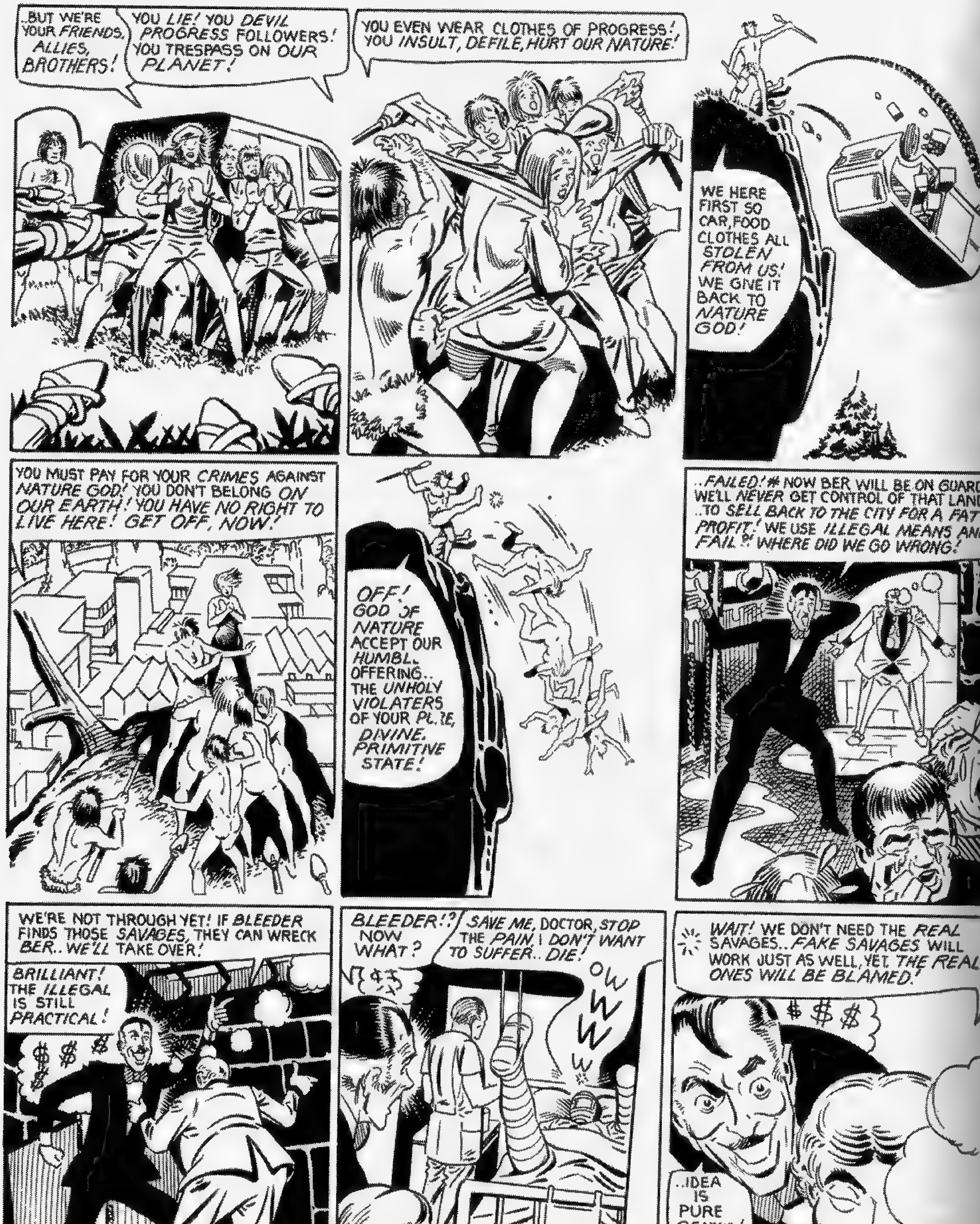

DITKO'S "H." SERIES
THE SCREAMER
COPYRIGHT © '94 by STEVE DITKO
OFF! WE WERE HERE *FIRST!* ALL EARTH BELONGS TO *US!* *EVERYONE ELSE GET OFF!*
STOP! *EVERYONE* MUST STOP MOVING *FORWARD!* *NO MORE PROGRESS!* IT'S *DESTROYING US ALL!*
THEY WOUND THE SACRED SKIN OF HOLY *GOD NATURE*, DEFILE *HER* NOBLE BEAUTY, DISFIGURE *HER* DIVINE FORM WITH STRUCTURES AND KILL *HER* PRECIOUS CREATIONS!.. *LOOK!*.. SOB!
BER FACTORY SITE
ANOTHER DEAD BUG! SOB! SOON ALL WILL BE EXTINCT! SOB! WE ARE *NATURE GOD'S* CHOSEN PEOPLE! WE MUST RETURN *NATURE* TO *HER* HOLY PRIMITIVE STATE! NO ONE MUST EVER BE ALOWED TO CHANGE *HER!*
THE VILLIAN IS THE DEVIL GOD *PROGRESS!* HE AND HIS EVIL FOLLOWERS MUST BE DESTROYED!
1.

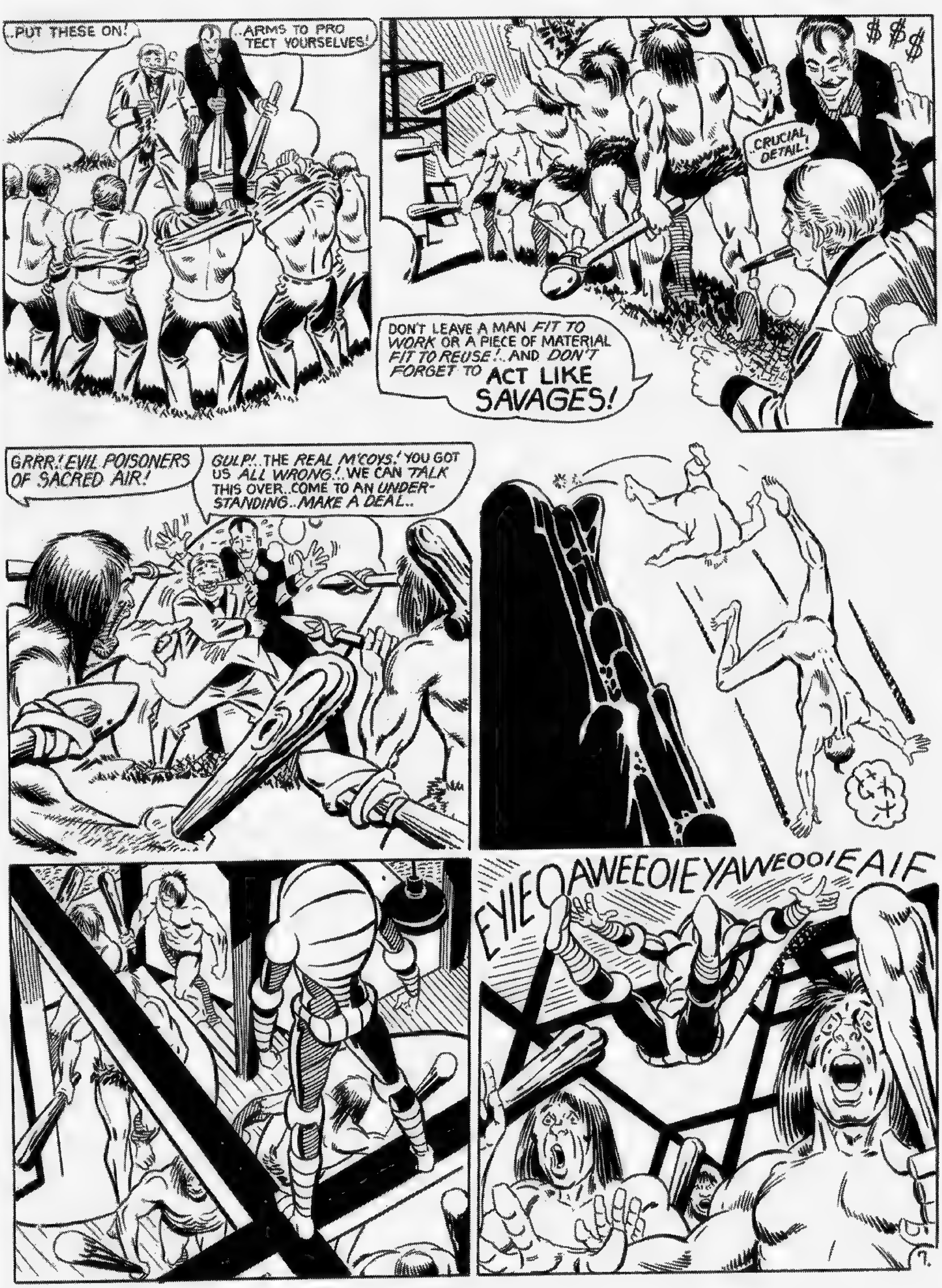

WE WILL RETURN *NATURE* TO HER PRIMITIVE GLORY WHERE NOTHING CHANGES, POLLUTES OR DEFILES *HER* HOLY STATE!
ONLY WE BELONG HERE, ONLY OUR WAY OF LIFE IS GOOD! ALL WHO SEEK PROGRESS WILL BE DRIVEN OFF EARTH OR BE DESTROYED!
MAYOR, I HELPED YOU GET ELECTED! THAT CITY LAND BER GOT YOU PROMISED TO SELL ME.. *CHEAP!*
$
*© BER LEGALLY OUTFOXED ME BUT THERE'S *ILLEGAL* WAYS! YOU'LL GET THAT LAND YET AND I'LL GET MY KICKBACK! WE'LL BOTH EARN A PROFIT!
HIS FACTORY WILL NEVER GET BUILT! I STIRRED UP A PROBLEM AGAINST HIM.. *BLEEDER*, THE *NATURE PLEADER!*
$
..A STROKE OF *GENUIS!* BLEEDER *REALLY BELIEVES* WHAT HE SAYS!
STOP BER
PROGRESS IS UNNATURAL UNCIVILIZED INHUMAN. UNATTRACT-IVE.. AN EYE SORE!
NO MORE BUILDING, PROGRESS, POLLUTION! ..BACK TO PRIMITIVE LIVING!
NATURE IS LIFE! PROGRESS IS DEATH!
NATURE IS CIVILIZATION! PROGRESS IS BARBAIRISM. THE CAVE NOT THE SKYSCRAPER.
EVIL MEN WANT PROGRESS.. GOOD SANE MEN WANT TO LEAVE ALL AS IT IS.
HUMAN LIFE DEPENDS ON STOPPING PROGRESS AND GOING BACK TO THE SANE, HEALTHY, GOOD OLD CARE FREE DAYS BEFORE SCIENCE AND PROGRESS!
NO MORE FACT BER
ACT TO STOP PROGRESS
AAARRGHH! EVIL PROGRESS KILLS *NATURE*. WE *KILL* KILLERS!
HEY!? WHO.. WHAT ARE THEY?!
EEIYIEOAWEEOIWEIIIAHIEEAIEA
CRAZY CRY!? W.. WHO?
..??!
2.

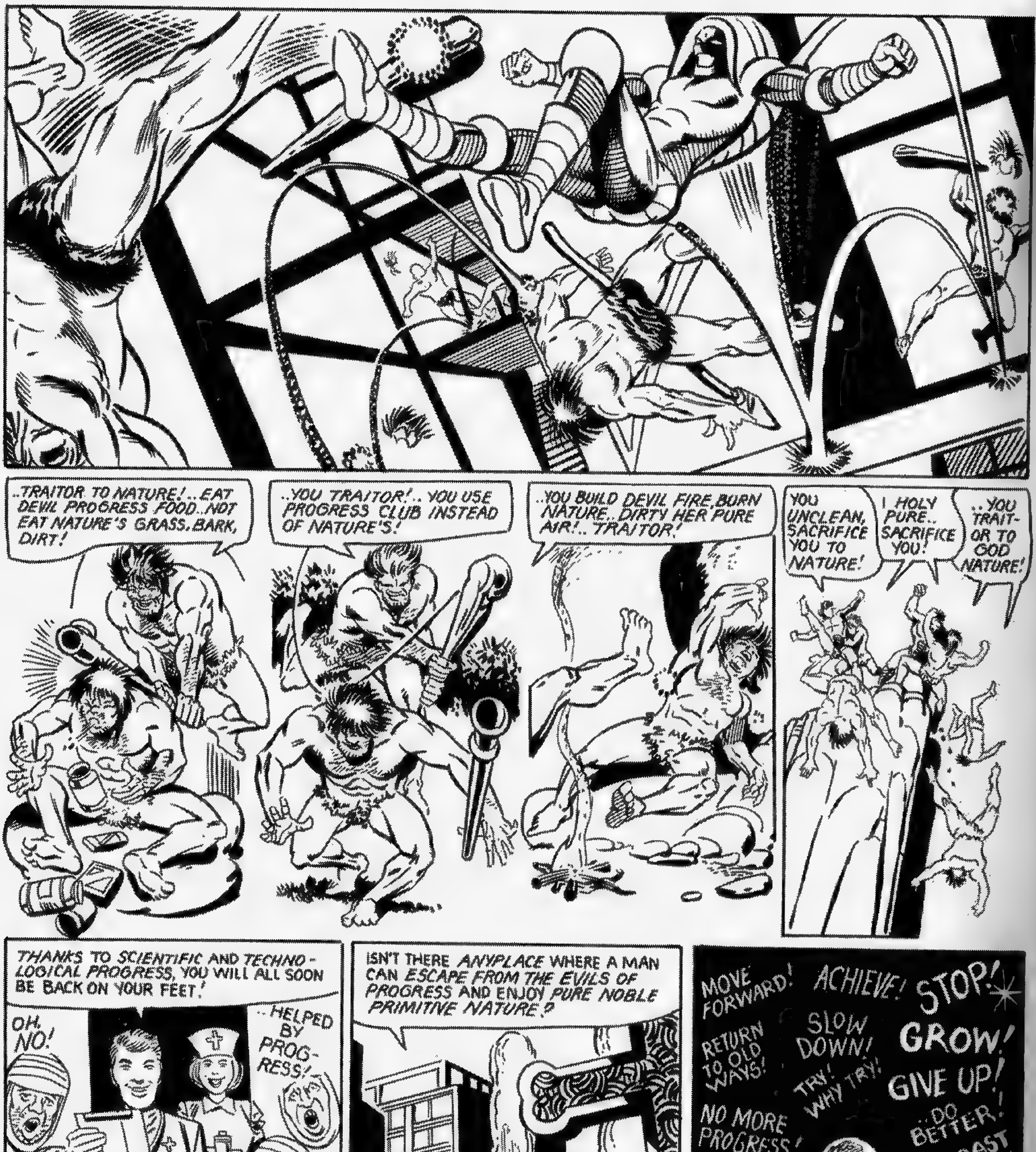

..FLEE, DEMON IS TOO POWERFUL..TOO CUNNING!
BUT WE NOT GIVE UP! EARTH IS RIGHTFULLY OURS! WE DRIVE EVERYONE ELSE OFF. STOP PROGRESS!
YAH, I HEARD ABOUT THE ATTACK ON BER'S SITE! I SENT BLEEDER TO CONTACT THOSE SAVAGES AND COMBINE FORCES IN A COMMON CAUSE!
BRILLIANT MOVE!
$$$$
AND WITH BANKER BOB'S HELP, I GOT EVERYONE BELIEVING BER'S CREDIT IS NO GOOD! EVERYONE HE DEALS WITH NOW WANTS CASH!
..CREATIVE THINKING!
SO HE'S GOT 50,000 IN COLD CASH TO PAY FOR WHATEVER HE NEEDS..., AND IF WE TAKE IT.. HE'S BROKE!
$$$$
MAYOR MOTT, I KNOW SOME GUYS NOT AFRAID TO GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY WITH EVIL MONEY! HEH! HEH!
3.


WE'LL TAKE STATION WAGON! GET PLENTY OF CANNED FOODS, DRINKS, ALSO PORTABLE STOVE, T.V., BLANKETS. WE DON'T KNOW HOW LONG BEFORE WE FIND OUR NOBLE PRIMITIVE FRIENDS!
YES, MR. BLEEDER!
NO REAL DAMAGE AT THE SITE BUT I'M BETTING OUR TROUBLES ARE NOT OVER!
NOT WITH ALL THAT COLD CASH HERE, MR. BER!
WE'LL KEEP A GUARD ON IT DAY AND NIGHT! WOULD ANYONE DARE TRY TO GET IT?
IT'S A TEMPTATION EVEN FOR THOSE NOT OUT TO STOP ME BUILDING!
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW ANYTHING! JUST GET THE MONEY AND DON'T GET CAUGHT.. OR RECOGNIZED!
HEH! HEH! LEAVE IT TO OTTO THE UNDERTAKER!
IEYAHIEOWAIEOIE
..A DUMMY?!
..IS US!..WHA..
4.


STEP ON IT! # NO DOUGH! ..LUCKY TO GET AWAY!
..THE NUT IS BACK! GET THE #@%! OFF!
I'M GLAD I LISTENED TO YOU! I SURE HOPE YOU CAN STOP FUTURE TROUBLE!
..BER IS JUST A GREEDY, SELFISH MONEY HUNGRY, AMBITIOUS #@!
WOW! TOOLS!
THIS IS A BARGAIN!
..MAKES LIFE COMFORTABLE!
..BER'S FACTORY WILL JUST SPOIL OUR ENVIROMENT, POLUTE OUR AIR AND REDUCE OUR LIFE SPAN!
..NEED A LAW TO CREATE JOBS, GET MONEY, ..WHATEVER WE WANT!
I WANT WHAT OTHERS HAVE!
..TAKING UP A HOBBY!
..ITEMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD!
..GET A DOZEN!
..NEED!
..IF WE STOP PEOPLE THINKING..WE STOP NEW IDEAS..GADGETS ..WE STOP PRODUCTION..WE STOP PROGRESS..STOP POLLUTION!..SIMPLE!
I WANT NECESSITIES, OTHERS WANT LUXURIES!
LIFE WAS BETTER BEFORE TECHNOLOGY AND PROGRESS!
..TO RELAX ..ENJOY!
A BETTER MODEL!
..SAVE TIME..WORK!
..WANT!
..CAN AFFORD!
..PRACTICAL!
GIVE ME THE CAVE MAN DAYS OVER TODAY!
WE CAN'T LET PEOPLE ACHIEVE AS THEY PLEASE!
DEPARTMENT STORE.
5.


..BUT WE'RE YOUR *FRIENDS*, *ALLIES*, *BROTHERS*!
YOU *LIE*! YOU *DEVIL PROGRESS* FOLLOWERS! YOU TRESPASS ON *OUR PLANET*!
YOU EVEN WEAR CLOTHES OF PROGRESS! YOU *INSULT, DEFILE, HURT OUR NATURE*!
WE HERE FIRST SO CAR, FOOD CLOTHES ALL *STOLEN FROM US*! WE GIVE IT BACK TO *NATURE GOD*!
YOU MUST PAY FOR YOUR *CRIMES* AGAINST *NATURE GOD*! YOU DON'T BELONG *ON OUR EARTH*! *YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO LIVE HERE*! *GET OFF, NOW*!
OFF! *GOD OF NATURE* ACCEPT OUR *HUMBLE* OFFERING.. THE *UNHOLY VIOLATERS* OF YOUR *PURE*, *DIVINE*, *PRIMITIVE STATE*!
..*FAILED*! # NOW BER WILL BE ON GUARD! WE'LL *NEVER* GET CONTROL OF THAT LAND ..TO *SELL BACK TO THE CITY FOR A FAT PROFIT*! WE USE *ILLEGAL MEANS* AND *FAIL*?! WHERE DID WE GO WRONG!
WE'RE NOT THROUGH YET! IF *BLEEDER* FINDS THOSE *SAVAGES*, THEY CAN WRECK *BER*.. WE'LL TAKE OVER!
BRILLIANT! THE *ILLEGAL* IS STILL *PRACTICAL*!
$ $ $
BLEEDER!? NOW WHAT?
SAVE ME, DOCTOR, *STOP* THE *PAIN*, I *DON'T WANT* TO SUFFER.. DIE!
OWWWW
WAIT! WE DON'T NEED THE *REAL* SAVAGES.. *FAKE SAVAGES* WILL WORK JUST AS WELL, YET, *THE REAL ONES WILL BE BLAMED*!
$ $ $
..IDEA IS PURE GENUIS!
6


..PUT THESE ON!
..ARMS TO PRO TECT YOURSELVES!
$ $ $
..CRUCIAL DETAIL!
DON'T LEAVE A MAN FIT TO WORK OR A PIECE OF MATERIAL FIT TO REUSE!..AND DON'T FORGET TO ACT LIKE SAVAGES!
GRRR! EVIL POISONERS OF SACRED AIR!
GULP!..THE REAL M'COYS! YOU GOT US ALL WRONG!..WE CAN TALK THIS OVER..COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING..MAKE A DEAL..
EYIEOAWEEOIEYAWEOOIEAIF
7.


..TRAITOR TO NATURE!..EAT DEVIL PROGRESS FOOD..NOT EAT NATURE'S GRASS, BARK, DIRT!
..YOU TRAITOR!..YOU USE PROGRESS CLUB INSTEAD OF NATURE'S!
..YOU BUILD DEVIL FIRE, BURN NATURE..DIRTY HER PURE AIR!..TRAITOR!
YOU UNCLEAN, SACRIFICE YOU TO NATURE!
I HOLY PURE..SACRIFICE YOU!
..YOU TRAITOR TO GOD NATURE!
THANKS TO SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS, YOU WILL ALL SOON BE BACK ON YOUR FEET.'
OH, NO!
..HELPED BY PROGRESS!
GROAN!
ISN'T THERE ANYPLACE WHERE A MAN CAN ESCAPE FROM THE EVILS OF PROGRESS AND ENJOY PURE NOBLE PRIMITIVE NATURE?
R.I.P.
MOVE FORWARD!
ACHIEVE!
STOP!
RETURN TO OLD WAYS!
SLOW DOWN!
GROW!
TRY! WHY TRY!
GIVE UP!
NO MORE PROGRESS!
..DO BETTER!
..COAST ALONG!
..STOP IMPROVING!
..STOP THINKING!
ADVANCE!
HALT!
RETREAT!
SURRENDER!
STOP LIFE!
STOP!
8. END

AND SO...

Before I close this issue and tell what lies ahead, it seem in order to give a history of Comic Crusader.

Issue #1 - March, 1968.

The cover featuring the golden age Green Lantern and the majority of the interior art was done by myself. Artists are hard to find when you're starting out. The exceptions were Bob Cosgrove and Bill Loring (an ad agency artist). Three items made this issue a landmark for its era and set the course for the future. 1. An interview with an artist that would soon revolutionize the comic industry and set the pace for those that followed him...JIM STERANKO. 2. The start of a series called "The First Inhumans." A series about super funny animal characters that received wide aclaim and got C.C. mentioned in DC's "Wonderful World of Fanzines" column. 3. The first Defender story. Because the stories were well thought out, this character became one of fandom's favorite ama-heroes.

Issue #2 - June, 1968

Again the cover and most of the art were by me. Exceptions - Bob Cosgrove and Diana Salford (art teacher). P.A.L. an ad agency friend who did not want his name revealed did work too. I inked his art. The important feature of this issue was the article Bob and I did on Steve Ditko. It led us to meet and become friends with Steve. A friendship we both value highly. His art soon graced C.C.'s pages and you'll note he's here for the "last hurrah."

Issue #3 - Sept. 1968

This was a special issue that was soon to become a tradition——C.C.'s first Convention coverage issue. The 1968 Scarp Con - The predecessor to the now famed New York July 4th Con's. This issue was so popular, I went into a second printing.

Issue #4 - Dec. 1968

This issue marked the start of other artists and writers doing work for C.C. The cover was by a man who I'd come to admire (and still do very much today) JOHN FANTUCCHIO. John did some of the most outstanding art ever done in fandom and I was elated to have him do some for me. A Jim Steranko Nick Fury drawing and a Steve Ditko Mr. A. made this issue tops. Other art by Donna Astin, Bob Cosgrove, Joe Kurnave and a super fan Steve Fritz. Now I was really in luck! I had aquired a writer who produced some of the most imaginative work ever done in fandom. He became a close friend...I had met TOM FAGAN! Tom did some of the greatest articles ever read in fandom for C.C. His work is legend even today.

Issue #5 - March, 1969

A Jim Steranko cover of my hero The Defender. Art by Steve Ditko, Steve Fritz, Bill Wilson, John Fantucchio, Wade Hampton, Ronn Foss (one of my favorite fan artists), P.A.L. and Dennis Fujitake. Dennis was one of three fans from Hawaii who made C.C. a pleasure to put out. The pro article was on Gardner Fox and I was soon fortunate to meet this comic book legend.

Issue #6 - Summer 1969

A banner issue! Steve Ditko has part 1 of an 8 page strip in it. Full page Steranko Green Lantern and a cover by Fantucchio. Plus art by Astin, Fritz, Foss, Cosgrove, Fujitake, Gary Kato and Keith Fukumitsu. (*Note: Greim fouls up and spells Fukumitsu wrong for a number of issues.) Bob and I do a Joe Orlando article that will be reprinted in a Nostalgia Press EC book. Tom Fagan is in this and future issues.

Issue #7 - Fall 1969

Another convention issue. Rich Buckler cover with a foul up on lettering. The word "the" is repeated twice in the cover's moral message. First art by Bill Black - fandom's best inker and my good friend. Part 2 of the Steve Ditko strip and a Steranko S.H.I.E.L.D. illo. New artists this issue (most of the ones I've mentioned were still represented, but to save space I'll only list ones not mentioned before.) - Anthony Kowalik (who proves to be one of the top idea men in fandom), Al Bradford (both he and Bob will become godfathers to my daughters, so that gives you an idea what I think of him), Bill Lund, Max Gottfried, Len Wein (a real pro even before he became one), Dave Transue, and Mike Howell.

Issue #8

Don Newton cover. Don's always there when I need him - a pal! Rutland Halloween Parade review. Dan Adkins interview and art. Long Defender strip and a Defender splash by Steve Ditko. Back cover of a nude Black Cat by Steranko causes no end of comment in fandom. New artists: Dave Harwood, Jim Shull, and Wendy Fletcher. Wendy would marry Richard Pini and we'd meet years later and become close friends.

Issue #9

First color cover and it's by Steranko. A beautiful drawing of The Ray. Bill Black and I create The Shade (ama-hero). Interview with a great guy, Joe Sinnott. Don Newton profile. Bullseye article with Kirby art. New artists: Gene Colan and Klaus Janson. Fantucchio back cover of The Spirit.

Issue #10

I do a cover again...the Green Lantern Corps and it's a convention issue. No one's ever done a Con issue as well as C.C. and this will be my last. New artists: Paul Neary, Bob Kline (art and profile) John Buscema inked by Sinnott, Mike Royer, Ronn Sutton, Jim Jones (fan friend), and Richard Corben. Full page Steranko and Don Newton inks me for the first time on the back cover. Both New York and Washington D.C.'s Metro Con are covered.

Issue #11

Flash Gordon Issue! Al Williamson cover and interior art. Mike Royer (love him) was responsible for almost the whole issue. Photos from the serials and part of the breakdowns of the serials were by him. Bob Cosgrove learns to hate Flash Gordon - won't watch the serials even today. I pencil and Bill Black inks a 4 page Flash Gordon history. Unpublished Raymond drawing. New artists: Dave Cockrum, Gray Morrow, Berni Wrightson, Wayne Pond, John Adkins Richardson, and Russ Manning. Contents of this issue are an all time high.

Issue #12

Barbarian issue. Bob Juanillo wash cover. New Tom Fagan article on Planet Comics' "Lost World" series. Beautiful Steranko full page splash goes with it. Editorial page by Bill Stillwell. Foss "Eclipse" strip. New artists: John Byrne, Mike Roberts, Clyde Caldwell, Jim Garrison. Frank Thorne interview by Craig Battmer (with art by Thorne). Full page Conan illo by Wrightson. Full page Thor by Buscema/Sinnott. Tony Isabella article on Conan. I found a friend in Tony. John Mansfield does a Carlos Gimenez article (top Spanish artist).

Issue #13

Steranko Defender cover. Long Defender story - Ditko Mr. A. story. Article on "13" oriented characters by Tom Fagan. Ronn Fortier interviews Joe Staton. Gil Kane back cover.

Issue #14

Magic issue. Fujitake/Black cover of Ibis. Raymond Miller article on Ibis - Fawcett Pub's man of magic. I meet and interview a wonderful guy...Mandrake the Magician artist FRED FREDERICKS. Kirby page and centerfold of The Demon. Steranko Wonder Woman (heh!) Ditko H Series strip, and my favorite Tom Fagan article on Mr. Mystic. New artists: Carlos Gimenez Beautiful Wendi Pini back cover.

Issue #15

Captain Marvel issue. Color Kurt Schaffenberger cover. Don Newton and John Clark do a Capt. Marvel vs. Sivana article. Bob, Al and I meet the two most interesting men I've ever interviewed...Jack and Otto Binder. Kurt Schaffenberger interview (another great guy!), a Ditko strip, A BILL EVERETT SALUTE. New artists: Mac Raboy, C.C. Beck, Dave Gibbons and Syd Shores

Issue #16

Joe Staton E-Man cover. Nick Cuti and Joe Staton interview (Staton art). Gil Kane "Blackmark" illo. Russ Manning interview on Magnus Robot Fighter (with art). New Gods article by Bob Cosgrove with the meeting of Darkseid and Orion by Kirby and Sinnott. Marie Severin interview/art by Bruce Patterson. Frank McLaughlin strip and a Steve Hickman back cover. New artists: Alan Hutchinson and Carl Taylor. Mike Royer full page Magnus art.

Issue #17

DEATH ISSUE!

Well that's C.C.'s history. Hope I haven't left anyone out! As for me, I'm now working on Comic Crusader Storybook. This will be a huge book of fandom's top ama-heroes. The Defender (yeah he's alive) will be there, as well as Space Guardian, The Shade, Dr. Weird, White Raven, The Eclipse and many more. There will also be a number of pro illustrations of these heroes making it a volume to remember. All the art is of pro quality and should top anything ever produced along these lines. Watch for the ads sometime in the future. Until we meet again you can read my comments in Alan Light's TBG, or write me at BOX 132, DEDHAM, MASS. 02026.

Best- MARTIN L. GREIM

Dave Cockrum

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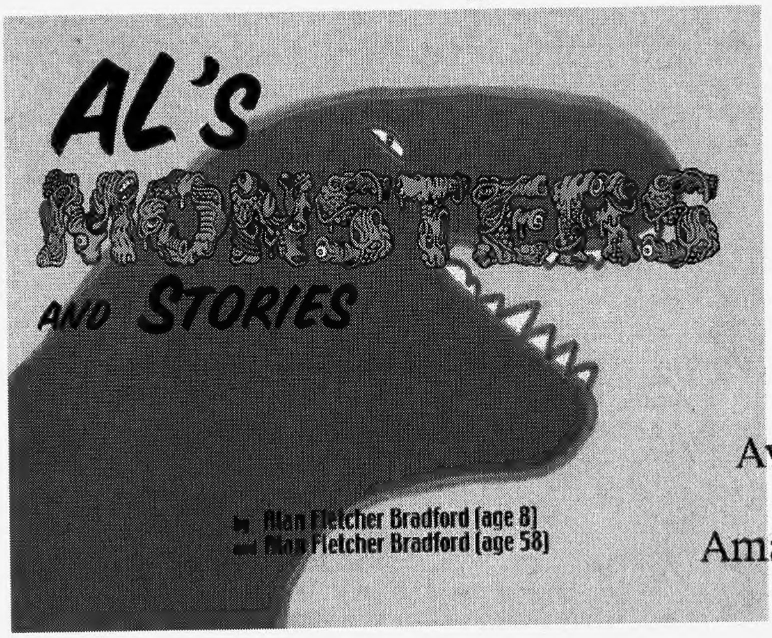
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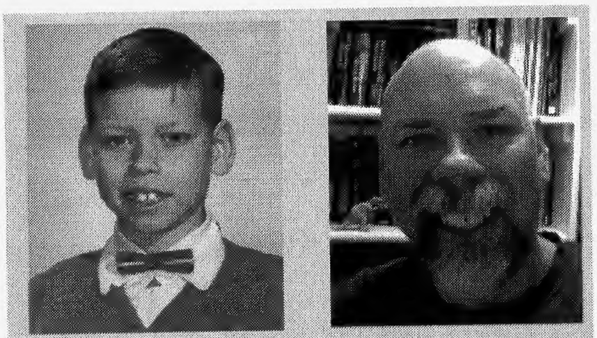

Fifty years in the making! These photos show author/illustrator Alan Bradford at age 8, when he first created these stories, and age 58, when he revised and completed them.

Five tales of
laughs and
monsters
for 8-year-olds...
and up!

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10 May 2022

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In the late 1960s and throughout most of the 1970s Martin L. Greim's COMIC CRUSADER was among the most highly respected comics fanzines in the country. This volume collects all 17 issues, complete and uncut. Pictured here are Marty Greim, Bob Cosgrove, and Al Bradford.

Photo taken in 1999 by Carol Bradford.

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